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A case study of the educational reform efforts of former Mississippi Governor William F. Winter

James Klee Hawkins

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A CASE STUDY OF THE EDUCATIONAL REFORM EFFORTS OF FORMER
MISSISSIPPI GOVERNOR WILLIAM F. WINTER

By

James Klee Hawkins

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in School Administration
in the Department of Instructional Systems,
Leadership, and Workforce Development

Mississippi State, Mississippi

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While serving as governor of Mississippi from 1980 until 1984, William F. Winter envisioned education as a key to moving Mississippi away from poverty. He championed educational reform as the means for improving schools with low student achievement. From the beginning of his tenure, Winter's goal was to improve K-12 education by implementing three needed improvements: public kindergarten, compulsory attendance, and a lay board of education. During the first two years of his administration, Winter struggled to gain support from within the legislative body itself. Mores of Mississippi, which relegated African Americans to a lesser role of social status, were difficult to overcome without causing a great deal of social upheaval. Winter's goal of educational reform was inclusive and not just aimed at the Whites of Mississippi. This necessitated carefully calculated planning. It was not until a controversial ending to the 1982 regular session that Winter began to explore options of calling a special session and promoting the goals for education to the constituents of the legislators. Through a series

of nine public forums that were carefully crafted to explore the issues and spotlight the legislators for that particular venue, Winter and his band of young supporters, called the “Boys of Spring”, were able to bring about a paradigm shift in attitudes and beliefs. The focus of this study is to examine Winter’s leadership style, relate the story of reform, and highlight one man’s dream for his state. Winter was a master at surrounding himself with a high quality and high energy staff, designing a plan for success, and knowing what changes needed to be made and how to bring them about effectively.

Specifically, this study will highlight hard work with purpose. It will also illustrate that those closest to a problem or issue should always be part of the solution to the problem, and finally, the study will show how a leader is only as good as the people with whom he or she surrounds himself/herself, with. The efforts that resulted in this study could and should be used to solve other problems of this society, especially those related to education.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to my wife and very best friend, Ruth Ellen Wilkerson Hawkins, and our two sons, Grant Allen and Bradley Scott who have been the inspiration for my very existence in life. The lessons in life from J.L., Lula, and Marlin Hawkins have carried me to this point. I also would dedicate this to all the educators who have touched my life in my working venues: Rocky Ford, Colorado High School, Vivian Field Junior High, Newman Smith High School, Oklahoma State University, and Jackson Preparatory School. Specifically, I would name and say thank you to friends who have supported me in unusual ways: Mike Sparks, my student teaching mentor teacher; Ellen Cook, the first Master Teacher I ever watched work; Jane Rice, the best English teacher ever; Jackson Prep teachers, especially my dear friends Carolyn Tatum, Jenni Smith, and Sherye Green and Karen Hardin at Cameron University, who provided much help in setup. Finally, I would mention the four men who have touched my life in an immeasurable way: Dr. Charles Blanton, Dr. Terry Land, Dr. Larry Kruse, and Coach Lance Brown.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Educational reform was needed in Mississippi in order improve the state not only educationally but to improve the national image of Mississippi and to improve the state economically by attracting new and much needed industrial development.

Integration of Mississippi's public schools had a significant impact on educational opportunities for both black and white students. By the fall of 1970, every public school district in Mississippi had been desegregated. At practically every turn, whites worked to subvert desegregation. As white districts consolidated administrative personnel, black administrators were often fired or demoted to secondary roles. Many black principals were demoted to assistant principals and black teachers who supported the civil rights movement were labeled as less qualified than white teachers and fired. In 1969-1970 Mississippi public schools had 168 black principals; by 1970-1971, that number was down to nineteen. The number of black teachers fell 12 percent, while the number of white teachers rose by about 9 percent. The loss of black role models was one more indication that integration would be conducted on terms established by the white community. In addition to creating a unitary school system, desegregation produced several unintended consequences. Most notable was "white flight" and creation of private schools. In 1968, the Mississippi Private School Association was formed and

by 1970, there were over 60 private schools affiliated with the MPSA. Between 1966 and 1970, the number of private school in Mississippi nearly doubled (Bolton, 1970)

Eubanks (2006) in his book *Ever is a long, long time* speaks to Mississippi in 1965 instituting a “freedom of choice” plan for its schools, which supposedly permitted all parents, black and white, to send their children to the school of their choice, even the white school in town. Just as the white power structure wanted, very few blacks made that choice. What was said by most grown-ups was that freedom of choice was the freedom to choose to have white people destroy you. Eubanks said that there was certainly a great deal of truth in that. Those few blacks who chose to go to the white school eventually came back to the black school with broken spirits and tales of mistreatment by students and teacher. Relating a personal story, he said:

We were at the center of the black social order where black professionals like my parents, teachers, county agents, and small business owners lived. Because I was the child of educated professionals, some might say I belonged to a privileged class of people, blacks with a sense of *noblesse oblige*, if there could be such a thing in Mississippi. My family was far from being part of a privileged class: We were BLACK, my parent’s meager incomes barely above the poverty line, and we were outsiders. In Mississippi, as far as white people were concerned, you couldn’t get any lower than that.

Mississippi’s social and political system was set up to keep black people poor and uneducated. Even if you had an education, professional options were few and many parents held jobs that was part of that limited realm. When I was growing up, it all seemed painfully normal, nothing exceptional: but looking back now, I realize how extraordinary it was. We lived a dignified life in an undignified system of racial segregation, largely ignoring the confines of the system. What I asked myself time and again when I discovered a tie between my parents and the Sovereignty Commission files was, were my parents threatening because of the way they lived their lives? Along with the feared outside agitating advocates of integration, what I knew and remembered from over-hearing snatches of adult conversation was that people like my parents had to be watched and kept in line, just to make sure they did not try to rise above their station and try to be equal to

white folks. Together, my parents fit the profile of the dreaded “uppity negroes” who had to be kept in check. (Eubanks, 2006)

Education reform was needed.

State leadership in Mississippi realized in the early 1960’s that significant progress could not take place in the state without an educated citizenry. A case in point was Senate Bill 1670 authorizing the Mississippi Research and Development Council to contract for an exhaustive study of the state’s educational needs and to “make recommendations calculated to produce a coordinated educational program which will attain the maximum development of human and other resources in the state of Mississippi. Another example was Governor Paul B. Johnson’s letter of transmittal to fellow Mississippians, highlighting two major concerns of the report. He declared: “(1) our children are not receiving as effective an education as they need, if they are to compete successfully in the world in which they are going to have to make a living; and (2) our economic development goals cannot be achieved unless we greatly strengthen our total educational system” (DeVitis & Vold, 1991).

Mississippi is a state with navigable rivers, fertile soil, natural resources, and a climate that lends itself to almost any activity with over 250 days of sunshine. Mississippi is a decidedly diverse state. The state is home to excellence in the arts, history embodied in architecture, and graciousness in manners. Educationally Mississippi has fifteen community colleges, eight private institutions, and eight public institutions of higher education.

The relatively calm and serene beauty of the state has been historically overwhelmed by events associated with rights of all of the Mississippi citizens. In May of

1954, the U.S. Supreme Court in its landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision ruled segregation in public schools unconstitutional. Two years later in 1956, Mississippi Senator James O. Eastland co-authored the “Southern Manifesto” which called for massive resistance to the U.S. Supreme Court desegregation rulings. Also in 1956, the Mississippi House voted 129-2 for a bill sponsored by House Speaker Walter Sillers to create the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission to fight integration. Eight days later on March 29, 1956, Governor J.P. Coleman signed the Sovereignty Commission bill into law and sat a chairman of the commission. In 1961, James Meredith (a black man) applied for admission to the University of Mississippi and was rejected. The next year (1962) Meredith’s enrollment application to Ole Miss was ordered to be “made effective immediately.” With the help of federal troops ordered in by President John F. Kennedy, Meredith enrolled at Ole Miss. The U.S. Supreme Court ordered that public school integration must occur “with all deliberate speed.”

Mississippi has had a history of denying equal educational opportunities to its minority children. For the first half of the 20th Century, Mississippi’s public education system was one of separate and not equal. In 1916, the per capita expenditure for each white child in school was \$10.60, and for each black child, \$2.26: in 1939, for every \$9.88 spent on each white student only \$1.00 was spent on blacks. The 1943 ratios were \$8.27 for whites to \$1.75 for blacks. In 1965, the ratios were \$10.29 to \$2.10 (Wilson, 1967).

Reform was needed.

It was a full 15 years after *Brown vs. Board of Education* that Mississippi seriously began the process of integrating its public school system. By that point, white flight may have rendered school integration plans largely ineffective (Hayden, 1955). Mississippi looked like many other states before integration, white students getting a majority of the tax money and the black students receiving less money which translated to poor facilities, poor materials, lower paid teachers and more importantly loss of consortium that would be gained by having black role models to help them overcome these dire conditions. After integration, the state's problems were only beginning. The private school population rose from 21,817 students in 1967 to 63,366 students in 1972. This "white flight" also shifted emphasis from public to private schools. With a majority of the state legislature being white, a majority of funds would not be sent to the public schools hence a further decrease in the quality of public education would result in loss of economic development, national image, and social conditions (W. Winter, personal communication, April 12, 2005).

Few informed Mississippians would fail to classify the state's poor educational system as one of the greatest impediments to state progress. Indeed, just as economic data have reminded them of their general impoverishment, grim statistics have substantiated Mississippi's poor record and lowly status in educating its citizenry. In virtually every category of public education, from high school graduation rates and expenditures per schoolchild to pupil performance on standardized tests or teacher salaries, statistics have regularly place Mississippi at or near the bottom of the nation. Statistics led the state of Mississippi to a sobering reassessment of its priorities. In recent years, citizens have

come to a greater understanding of the relationship between economic impoverishment and a poor educational system. Perhaps at no time in the history of Mississippi has this relationship been more skillfully communicated than in the successful 1979 gubernatorial campaign of William F. Winter. (DeVitis & Vold, 1991).

Legislative interaction was at the forefront of problems with education in Mississippi. In the early 1960's State Legislator Russell Fox from Claiborne County was categorized as "vicious" by journalist Bill Minor. He said that Fox worked very closely with House Speaker Walter Sillers. When Fox and Sillers did not want to hear any more about some bill that would improve education for blacks, Russell Fox would be the "killer of the legislation." With as many as 10 to 20 legislators standing, waiting to be recognized, Sillers would recognize Fox, who would get up and say, "Mr. Speaker, gentlemen, does this mean that those negras can be paid the same as the whites in this bill?" "Mr. Speaker," Fox would continue, "I move we indefinitely postpone this bill." That was the way it was done to keep the whites in a position of supremacy and blacks in a position of oppression (Crosby, 2005).

Students at black elementary schools were given the "hand me down" books that had been used for years. In the front cover of all public school books was a place to list the student and what year he had used the book. When the front cover label was filled, a new one was inserted on the inside of the back cover and it to would be filled with students' names and the year of use. When both labels were full and after a period of at least twelve years, the books would then be given to the black elementary school students to use. The books would be old and outdated but they were better than nothing and could

serve as a guide to teaching. A former student bearing witness to this time said that he could remember it like it was yesterday when his mother would say, “Let me see the book,” and just nod knowing it was all they had to go by (W. Johnson, personal communication March 1, 2006).

Reform was needed.

On Friday November 7, 2003, the William F. Winter Archives and History building was dedicated in Jackson, Mississippi. The building stands as a testimony to the life-long efforts of former governor William F. Winter. The building houses books, maps, government records, films, and newspapers relating to Mississippi history. The keynote address was given by Pulitzer Prize winning historian and journalist David Halbersam. Speaking at the dedication, Halbersam said that Governor Winter had helped forge positive changes in a state with a history complicated by race. He also said,

Governor, you're my favorite politician. You're my hero. I believed for a long time that America would not be whole until Mississippi really became part of it. And you, more than any other politician, are the architect of a new Mississippi and thus, the New America. (Pettus, 2003).

The early years of life are commonly referred to as the formative years, and this was certainly true for former Mississippi Governor William F. Winter. He was born in 1923 in Grenada, Mississippi, where he learned the value of formal education at an early age from his school teacher parents. An area in the family barn, cleaned out and furnished by Winter's father, was his first schoolroom. After learning the basics of reading from his mother, Winter read anything he could find. He was particularly partial to the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*.

While serving as governor of Mississippi from 1980 until 1984, Winter envisioned education as a key to moving Mississippi away from poverty by creating schools that would allow all Mississippians to gain an opportunity to either learn a trade or skill or attend college. The components of Winter's improvement plan were based on three pillars of change: public kindergarten, a compulsory attendance law, and a lay board of education. He championed educational reform as the means for improving schools with low student academic achievement. Winter labeled himself as a racial moderate and was an intellectual, which was not always popular or a helpful attribute in Mississippi politics. His calls for educational reform were not popular in a state where a majority of white children were in the private schools that were opened as a result of court ordered desegregation. The call for educational reform was construed by many Mississippians as an attempt to improve the plight of the Blacks in Mississippi. Constantly and consistently, William Winter would speak to "what is good for Mississippi" and not let his comments carry color themes (W. Winter, personal communication October 19, 2004). Through educational reform, Winter hoped to lead Mississippi to the head of the class of the New South (Anklam, 1982). In a National Public Radio interview in 1994, William Winter said that his kindergarten efforts were not supported because kindergarten was thought to be only for the white children in private schools and the legislature was not about to change it. Winter said in a NPR (National Public Radio) interview in 2004 that black children didn't go to school after 6th grade when he was a child. Winter said he never saw them get on the bus as he did, and only a very few of the children he started elementary school with graduated from high

school. Winter said he really never understood until years later why. Even though his parents taught him to respect everyone, he was, as a child, only observing and not questioning. Winter related how he had to overcome a very personal prejudice that was attached to his very name. He said his mother and father named him William Forrest Winter, with the Forrest coming from Nathaniel Forrest, the founder of the Ku Klux Klan organization (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004). A top aide of William Winter Dick Molpus, said that on more than one occasion he heard from Delta residents, “the best way to ruin a good field hand is to educate him.” Unfortunately, during the first two years of his administration the plan never received the legislative backing needed for passage. While race was never addressed publicly and openly, according to William Winter, the real battle in educational reform was in changing attitudes as well as those that took place in the political arenas of the state legislature.

In December 1982, after adjournment of the regular session of the state legislature, where yet another attempt at reform failed, Winter called a special legislative session to focus only on education-related items. Before the special session started, Winter and his committed supporters, “The Boys of Spring,” crisscrossed the state holding a series of nine public forums for the purpose of gaining support for the legislation that was to come up in the special session (Mullins, 1992). When the special session convened in December, 1982, public support that was organized from and a derivative of the nine public meetings drove the passage of the Education Reform Act of 1982, which provided legislation for mandatory kindergarten, compulsory attendance, and a lay state board of education. Two decades later, credit for that landmark legislation

is attributed to Winter, his supporters and staff, and those who served in the 1982 state legislature.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Widespread educational reform in this country has occurred rarely. A noted historian of U.S. education, Carl Kaestle (1990), believes that reform on a broad base has been successful only when the reformers have firmly shaped public consensus behind their proposed changes.

An illustration of public consensus supporting reform was the reaction of Americans to the launching of Sputnik by the Russians on October 4, 1957. Diane Ravitch in her book *The Troubled Crusade: American Education 1945-1980*, claims that this event ended the debate that had been evident since the end of World War II about the quality of American education. The proponents of a more rigorous educational system felt they were finally proven correct. A new crisis in education arose and created another need for reformers. Critics blamed the schools for failing to provide national security because of Russian superiority, which was the result of a better educated populace in math and science. For the first time since the end of World War II, Americans were united in their belief that the national interest was dependent on improving the quality of the nation's schools. There was a demand that the federal government intervene quickly (Ravitch, 1985).

The school crisis caused major private foundations, which had previously been primarily interested in higher education, to contribute to the efforts to improve public

education. The Carnegie Corporation, the Ford Foundation, and the National Science Foundation significantly increased their roles in school reform. Comprehensive high schools, curriculum innovations, different teaching models, language laboratories, non-graded programs, and summer institutes for teachers were a few of the areas addressed by the reformers. The other major reform movement of the 1950's, and the one of particular interest in this study, was not the result of public consensus, but rather the result of racial inequality in education. The Supreme Court's decision in 1954 started a very gradual process of restructuring the educational systems. The racial issue slowly became a central factor in most educational decisions as to how schools would be funded, how teachers would be trained and employed, how academic progress was to be assessed, and how students were assigned to schools (Ravitch, 1985).

The national process of social change accelerated into the decade of the sixties and cut short the curriculum reform that had begun in 1957. The education structure had new problems and pressures such as higher enrollment, more black students, higher dropouts and social upheavals. The more rigorous curriculum was replaced with the "smorgasbord" curriculum. This differentiated curriculum allowed schools to accommodate the masses with wide diversities in interest and abilities. The pursuit of academic excellence was superseded by concern for the needs of the disadvantaged.

During the early sixties, the colleges and universities relaxed admission requirements to provide greater access to those who might profit from higher education. As these standards were reduced, high schools lowered their graduation requirements (Ravitch, 1985).

The federal government rushed into the education arena to help meet the needs of disadvantage minority children with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965. The Act, which was a landmark in the history of education in America, authorized many remedial and compensatory programs which were initiated by federal agencies, state agencies, and local school systems. This Act and the Higher Education Act passed also in 1965 started the rapid escalations of federal expenditures for education. In 1966, the federal education largesse was 4.5 billion dollars. By 1970, it had almost doubled to 8.8 billion dollars (Cremin, 1990).

Kaestle said that major national reforms of public education come in cycles. These cycles are often labeled as “liberal”, which means emphasis on equal access and student diversity, or “conservative”, which means emphasis on standards and traditional academic knowledge. Kaestle felt these cycles of school reform had “limited effects compared to their goals.” Reform is difficult because schools are “inert institutions with limited resources” to devote to change (Kaestle, 1990).

Many of the reform movements in states have led to a model that is based on accountability. Former southern governors Bill Clinton and George Bush were strong in pursuing educational reform which occurred with more rapidity than in most other southern states. President Bush, using the model he developed in Texas in the late 1980’s, pushed for, and gained adoption of No Child Left Behind. This testing-based model was, in Texas at least, a model that relied on thorough and periodic tests that must be passed to promote to next grade or in the case of the eleventh grade, passed in order to earn a high school diploma (No Child Left Behind, 2003).

Georgia was the forerunner of the shift in scholarship programs for high school graduates. Governor Zell Miller staked his political future on giving Georgia high school graduates a college scholarship if they had achieved a B average or better. While Governor Miller funded the program with lottery dollars, other states could not find the same level of support. Georgia was initially a leader in the reform efforts, but has in recent years found it difficult to fund the “Hope Scholarship” program (“HOPE”, 1998).

While the South has shown leadership in some areas of reform, choice or vouchers has been slow to emerge as an accepted method of changing the face of education. Charter schools have had difficulties in being successful because of uncertain funding methodologies (C. Blanton, personal communication, October 18, 2004).

It has become much more feasible for citizens to remove their children from the public schools and teach them at home. In some states, a written statement to that effect is all that is needed to remove the child from the public schools and not be in violation of compulsory attendance laws. In a select few Southern states, a statement is not even required to withdraw children from school. The home schooled students in 12 Southern states have seen marked increases in achievement scores, while all Southern states showed an increase in 14-year-old students’ math scores. Only 54.8 percent of Mississippi’s population had completed four years of high school in 1980. Nationally, the completion rate was 75 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 1987).

Mississippi ranked forty-sixth in the percentage of its population enrolled in vocational or technical training with four out of every 1,000. The national figure was ninety-three out of every 1000. For every 100 students who graduated from high school, there were 59

who dropped out somewhere during the 12 year process. Nationally the figure was 29, and the southern region of the United States was 38 (Southern Regional Education Board, 1981).

In 1980, Mississippi's teachers were the lowest paid in the nation. The average salary for a classroom teacher was \$11,851, compared to the southeastern average or \$13,819. The declining enrollment in teacher education reflected the sparse benefits of the profession. In 1971, education provided 39 percent of all baccalaureate degrees conferred by Mississippi's eight public institutions of higher learning. Ten years later in 1981, this percentage had declined to 20 percent (Mississippi Department of Education, 1981).

In the school year 1980-1981, of the over 12,000 Mississippi students who dropped out of school, 255 were first graders. An estimated 6,000 six year olds did not start school in 1980. The Mississippi Legislature had repealed a compulsory attendance law in the early sixties as schools began to desegregate. In 1977, another compulsory attendance law was passed for children ages 7 – 13, but it was not enforced, and there were no penalties (Weaver, 1982).

The lag in Southern schools' levels of achievement for African-American children was a major concern. Passage rates for African-American students varied from 70% to 89% on standardized tests (*No Child Left Behind*, 2003). The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools studying these achievement levels found African-American students two to three years behind white students in achievement levels. The issue that was of concern, not only in the South, but all across America, was the lack of money to

fund education. States were cutting education budgets in order to help with deficits in other areas (Weaver, 1982).

The issues that Governor Winter saw, addressed, and corrected under his leadership in 1982 reflect directly the needs addressed previously. He identified and addressed testing, choice, scholarships, and dollars for education. Governor Winter evaluated the state of education in Mississippi and offered a change. Winter (1) determined the need, which was to improve key components of the educational system in Mississippi. He desired to create public kindergarten, implement compulsory attendance, and create a lay board of education. He then used two different techniques to meet the needs of education in the state. He used the limited power and authority he had over the legislative branch, and a grassroots effort to touch the people and gain their support. This combination allowed Winter to make up for a weak chief executive by going directly to the constituents and gaining their support. Winter, after (2) designing a plan to reform education, (3) developed the exact plan to meet the needs of the state. He would call a special session of the legislature, before which he would hold a series of nine town hall meetings all over Mississippi to gain public input and discuss their needs and his plan. Winter then took the fourth step by (4) delivering the plan to the people of Mississippi, asking for their help and support in the passage of the plan. When the special session met in December 1982, the groundwork had been laid for a change in education in the state. (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004)

While many governors talked about reform, urged reform, and laid a foundation for it, few actually saw any changes because of lack of support from state legislatures.

Mike Huckabee, current Governor of Arkansas is a prime example. For a complete year, 2003, Huckabee promoted very progressive plans to reform the Arkansas public school system that had been ruled unconstitutional in November 2002. Huckabee said, “I would hate for it to be said of me by future historians that I simply played politics with the law and with the children of Arkansas.” During the regular session of the legislature, Governor Huckabee was optimistic that a reform package would be passed. In an attempt to gain passage the governor gave a very passionate plea to reform education and wipe away decades of ranking at or near the bottom, not only regionally but nationally as well. Unlike Mississippi had done in 1982, Arkansas legislators failed to heed the call of the governor and as of today Arkansas still has no reform package in place (Henry, 2003).

The report, *A Nation At Risk*, was the catalyst for continuous attempts at education reform. Noted history professor at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mars Vinovshis served as an advisor to all presidents elected after *A Nation At Risk* was released in 1983. George H. W. Bush pushed educational reform titled *America 2000* which sought five competencies for all high school graduates to possess. The five competencies were: 1) identifies, organizes plans and allocates resources, 2) works well with others, 3) acquires and uses information, 4) understands complex-inter-relationships, and 5) works with a variety of technologies. (*What Work Requires of Schools*, 2000).

President Clinton’s *Goals 2000* addressed children’s school readiness, completion of high school, student achievement and citizenship, teacher education and professional development, national ranking of science and math, adult literacy and lifelong learning,

safe, disciplined, and alcohol and drug free schools, and participation of parents in the educational process (House Resolution 1804, 1994).

Currently, as stated earlier, President George W. Bush is in the midst of his own reform efforts, *No Child Left Behind*. Time will determine if the specific goals of his or of any other reform effort are fruitful.

According to Vinovskis, all three were short in vision instead of long on implementation followed by research. He said, "They keep spinning their wheels. Everybody wants their own plan, so we go through these big initiatives in an approach where we try a fad and don't really measure it to see whether it [actually] works." Vinovskis states that most presidents and governors each offer reform because of a political focus aimed toward a short termed solution. The process of identifying good practices, testing their effectiveness in model programs, and then trying them out in different, yet real settings would take 15 to 20 years. Since *A Nation at Risk*, few have desired, or more importantly, demonstrated the patience for rigorous and sustained efforts at fixing the problem (*A Nation at Risk*, 2003). Governor Winter's plan was more streamlined in that he allowed those closest to the problem, the constituents, a voice in solving the problem.

Robert Greenleaf in his book, *Servant Leadership*, addresses a true educational vision:

I would like to see the opportunity offered, at both secondary and college levels, for the poor to be prepared to return to their roots and become leaders among the disadvantaged. This suggestion rests upon the belief that the situation of the poor, particularly the neglect of their children, is a national disgrace in our affluent country, and that, if this condition is to be made right, the best service that a school can render to these people may not be to homogenize them into the upper

classes, but to help those who have a value orientation that favors it, to develop their ability to lead their people to secure a better life for many. It is the right of the disadvantaged young people to upgrade them in whatever way they wish. (Greenleaf, 1977).

Winter and his efforts to reform education in Mississippi came under attack.

Winter favored the rights of parents to send their children to public or private schools.

The desired result would be their returning to help the people with whom the individual had grown up with and knew personally (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004). Winter saw the battle to improve education as one likened to war itself. Sun Tzu wrote in *The Art of War* of leadership attempting to subdue the enemy:

An army (opponent) may be likened to water. Water leaves the high places and seeks the hollows; an army turns from strengths and attacks emptiness. The flow of the water is regulated by the shape of the ground; victory is gained by acting in accordance with the state of the enemy, (Tzu, 1910)

William Winter's efforts were a battle to improve education for all. He sought to find the opposition to education and remove that resistance in order for reform to occur in Mississippi. Winter's grassroots efforts resembled warfare in that he literally attempted to visit with and contact every citizen in the state.

According to Winter, all change comes through people. What Winter also recognized was the significance of selecting the right people to plan, present, and implement the changes in Mississippi education. It was traditional to have in place good schools to attract industrial development within the state. Winter took a different approach as he planned his reform of education. He desired to have industry drive the improvement of the school. Winter said he was going to see that Mississippi did not "take it on the chin" in the kinds of programs that were essential for the continued economic

growth and development of this state. Winter also said he was committed to safeguarding programs that affect the lives and well-being of the citizens of the state of Mississippi (W. Winter, personal conversation, October 19, 2004).

Much of what a leader does and is thought to be lies in the realm of military tactics. In reality, the principles that a military leader uses are some of the same principles that a political leader uses. While some leaders work on issues that are so abstruse the common man has no knowledge of what is being accomplished, most work in those areas that seemingly everyone has either an opinion or solution. Eliyahu M. Goldratt in his book *The Goal* defines problems as opportunities (Goldratt, 1990). He says that most leaders spend a majority of their time taking corrective actions to solve problems rather than asking what to change in order to gain some order of effectiveness. Usually one of the first skills sought in a leader is how to pinpoint core problems and correct them. The correcting of the problem, which often has a major impact, will often lead to the trap of a quick fix of how to cause the change to occur in order to correct the problem. While many leaders focus on complex or even simple solutions that might or might not be effective, leaders are asked, according to Goldratt, to take the problem-solving dynamic to a higher level of how to cause the change to occur. The first two questions of what to change and what to change to are actually technical type questions that are often answered without much thought or deliberation. The third question, how to cause the change, is more psychological which is why it is so significant to ask and answer (Goldratt, 1990). Winter took Goldratt's theory to the third level when he was forced to answer the question, by what method can we make change (reform) happen and

happen successfully in Mississippi? Winter left his podium in the governor's office and went among the people asking as many individuals as possible for their support to change and improve education in Mississippi. The new processes that have occurred in education over the past thirty years support this point. Open concept schools, team teaching, modular scheduling, block scheduling, and modified block scheduling all were attempts to change or improve. The educators knew what to change to, but often did not follow Goldratt's suggestion of how to cause the change and how to make it last. Winter felt that many changes that have historically occurred in education are not of substance, but of reaction to a need. TheodoreSizer in his book, *Places for Learning, Places for Joy*, says that true reform is arduous. In many states educational change takes the form of raising teacher salaries, lowering classroom sizes, or pouring more and more money into the general operating budgets of most schools. Sizer says:

Schools change marginally, when at all...Most Americans are fundamentally satisfied with schools as they are. Most Americans do not listen to the critics carefully enough (if they listen at all) to understand their message. Most Americans distrust the intellectual class from which virtually all the critics are drawn. They want their schools to be conservative, traditional, not the engines of social reform...if the majority wanted to change the schools; they would have done so. (Sizer, 1973)

While Governor Winter was willing to address some of the immediate needs that education of the state faced, he sought long-term change in Mississippi education. He felt that lack of change would doom the state of Mississippi to remain the laughing stock of America and hinder his efforts to bring economic growth to the state (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

Helmut Wilhelm addressed the kind of leadership and change that Winter sought and brought to Mississippi in speaking about change through the writings in the Chinese book, *The I Ching or Book of Changes*. Wilhelm stated:

Reflection on the simple fundamental facts of our experience brings immediate recognition of constant change. To the unsophisticated mind, the characteristic thing about phenomena is their dynamism. It is only abstract thinking that takes them out of their dynamic continuity and isolates them as static units... [But] it is inconstant change and growth alone that life can be grasped at all. If it is interrupted, the result is not death, which is really only an aspect of life, but life's reversal, its perversion... The opposite of change in Chinese thought is growth of what ought to decrease, the downfall of what ought to rule... Change is natural movement, development that can only reverse itself by going against nature... The concept of change is not an external, normative principle that imprints itself on phenomena that takes place naturally and spontaneously... To stand in the stream of this development is a datum of nature; to recognize it and follow it is responsibility and free choice... Safety is the clear knowledge of the right stand to be taken, security in the assurance that events are tolling the right direction... In this point of view, which accords the responsible person an influence on the course of things, change ceases to be an insidious, intangible snare, and becomes an organic corresponding to man's nature. No small role is thus assigned to man. (Wilhelm, 1950)

Former Oklahoma Governor George Nigh said that educational reform is usually an easy sell to the public if money is plentiful. In fact Nigh said, the two easiest sells to a governor's constituency, are better schools and highways. The need to sell "transformation" is a key in leadership. Governor George Nigh of Oklahoma used the Shewhart cycle to sell his programs. His continuous change model would identify the most important accomplishments of his team followed by what changes might be the most desirable. He would then carry out the change, observe the effects, and study the results. If the knowledge accumulated was sufficient to continue, he would repeat step one again by identifying accomplishments. This worked very well for Governor Nigh

because he was in an oil rich state in the late seventies and early eighties. (George Nigh, personal communication, September 28, 2004).

The achievements that Governor Winter sought were more amazing because of the economic difficulties that Mississippi faced during the time he was governor. Seeking such drastic changes in the educational climate was popular in theory yet difficult to bring about without a plan. Winter expressed concern about Mississippi's financial situation in an interview with Robert Shaw in December 1981. The Governor was frustrated at having to cut nearly \$76 million from the legislature's project appropriations funds in order to keep some control of budget expenditures. This caused great concern because of the need for more dollars to fund the proposed changes (Mullins, 1992).

Leadership is often defined only in what a person does. The forgotten factor takes into account what the person is, which in many cases drives him to do what he does. Genuine leadership often comes from within based on values like honesty, integrity, and trust. Programs and practices are the manifestations of many of these thoughts, beliefs, and values. The subtleties of leadership create and ensure a constancy of purpose between the leader's values and the programs that might be in place. (Gandossy, Efron, & Hewitt, 2004).

The key factors in enactment of educational reform are the states themselves. The role they play determining local policies and practices has been the subject of debate and scrutiny for at least the last 100 years, and each state can point to intra-state battles on the question of local versus state control of education. Currently, the focus on state standards and systems of accountability is driving local school districts in their policymaking that is

unprecedented. In addition, funding for local schools has shifted largely to a state responsibility, while in some states the funding is mainly a local responsibility. Whether state or local, changes in states economies drive many local decisions as school leaders seek answers to the dilemma of resource allocation. The solution as to how these two trends are managed, both at the state and local levels, is a result of the current political climate of the state at that time. The unfortunate fact is, very little time has been spent studying or explaining fund allocations at the state or local level with the exception of welfare reform (Brace & Jewett, 1995; Fitzpatrick & Hero, 1988).

Changing the role of states in educational reform was stimulated, somewhat by the 1983 federal commission report, *A Nation at Risk*, whose basic message has had a profound impact on the way we think and talk about changes needed in education. The recommendations were quickly picked up by the media (Bracy, 2003); by those who advocate outcome-based education (Rubin & Spady, 1984) and by reformers who felt that *A Nation at Risk* was a call for more rigorous curricular content and attention to what students know as consistent with their own efforts (Romberg, 1993; Wiggins, 1991). Civil rights advocates were certain that clearer standards would be a possible solution to the problem of a low quality of education for minority students (Abrams, 1985), and that those standards could be used to demand opportunity to learn (Porter, 1993).

One of the initial premises of the standards reform movement was quickly translated into a systematic approach that covered teacher preparation, evaluation, and school as well as student assessment. In the early 1990's a system of rewards based on how well the school/teacher/ student performed was clearly spelled out and labeled

“report cards for schools.” The feeling at the time was one of accountability based on documented results (Hannaway, 2003).

The emergence of accountability has been more controversial in the scholarly community. Aside from the measurement debates (Baker, 2002; Linn 2000), a great deal of discussion has centered on which of the accountability movements will affect students, teachers, and schools. The opinion of most is that poor students, immigrants, or special education students will suffer the most with scrutiny of test scores (McNeil, 2000).

While William Winter was attempting to change some basic structure of Mississippi public education in the 1980's, educational reform initiatives in the U.S. now focus on achievement tests as the factor in holding teachers, districts, and students accountable for their performance and is the impetus for improving that performance. Any analysis of the total impact of state policy on the quality and effectiveness of educational leaders must acknowledge the primacy of these efforts in school reform. In several states and several school districts with multi-schools, Fuhrman, Clune, and Elmore found that many districts leveraged the new reforms to their advantage in promoting their agendas for improvement and change (Fuhrmann, Clune, & Elmore, 1988). The results often lead to school districts increasing the number of reform initiatives over those encouraged by the states (Firestone, 1989; Fuhrman & Elmore, 1990). Educational reform agendas have shifted, beginning in the early 1980s from local school district reform to those reforms dictated by the state and federal government. Even today with *No Child Left Behind*, the role of the U.S. Government is evident and obvious. There are still differences among states, as each has its' own discretion in choosing

standards, benchmarks, tests, and strategies and what role they play in the total picture of a states educational structure. It is important to study the political culture of a state to determine which are selected and used and how they are selected (Marshall, Mitchell, & Wirt, 1989). The political culture of the state directly affects how different states and the educational leaders of that state define key policies for school improvement. The state of Mississippi had been passed over for relocation of many corporate sites because of the low quality of the educational system in Mississippi. William Winter felt that good schools would nurture industrial and economic growth; hence, he set in place a series of needed changes to improve the public system in his state.

Since many educational reforms cause high levels of sensitivity, it is not surprising that very few movements have achieved their stated goals (McDonnell, 1994). Many of the reform movements target specific problems with the assumption being made that if such issues are resolved, the entire system will improve. For any reform to work, no matter what level of implementation, an examination of the culture or environment where the change will take place must occur. The interpretation of the meanings, views, and patterns of behavior at those levels is the primary force in the policy being successful (Marshall, Mitchell, and Wirt, 1989). Not understanding the culture in which the reforms take place will lead to unsuccessful and inconsistent efforts in improving academic performance. Many such reform efforts that have failed in the past were mandated without concern and consideration for the school environment in which they were tried (Sizer, 1992).

When discussing reform and the sensitivity to the culture of implementation, there is most often a gap between how policy makers and policy practitioners understand the intent (Spillane, 2002). Teachers, administrators, and even stakeholders make assumptions from their perspective about policy and how it is to be interpreted and applied in their local climate. State policymakers also make assumptions that may be very different in mechanisms and approaches that will help to accomplish a particular reform effort. The tragedy lies in the assumptions the two worlds have and the amount of power they have over the policy (reform) itself. The legislators, staffers, state departments, professional association of teachers and administrators, boards of education, parent groups, and the governor all seek to be the author of the reform movement to produce a better product of educated young people (Marshall, Mitchell, & Wirt, 1989). William Winter was able to pass his reform package by uniting all the interested parties and an increased focus on a few basic needs in the state of Mississippi based on the national rating that had Mississippi at or near the bottom in nearly every category used to evaluate schools.

The presence of strong educational opinions at the state level can assist in the focus on the issues at hand. Sometimes the state is not alone in determining the future course of action. Education, while primarily a state function, must rely on the national influence to make sure all parties reach consensus (Marshall, Mitchell, & Wirt, 1989).

Educational reform, to be successful as Governor Winter's was, must take problem solving to a new level. Not only must changes be made, the changes must be made specifically, with the key element being how to make the change occur

successfully. The problem must be analyzed as to cause and effect and taken a step further to include effect, cause, and effect. Winter determined that he would mobilize the citizens of the state, who would have an effect on the legislators, which would lead to reform becoming a reality (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine how William Winter improved education while at the same time changing racial attitudes not only regionally but throughout the entire state of Mississippi.

Education had in the early 1970's undergone the federally mandated integration of public schools. The residual of that act caused an increase in the number of private schools for the white students and a decrease in spending for the schools that served predominately black students. Collecting data and filling in the blank areas were made much easier because of the ready and willing access the researcher had to Governor Winter, who was always eager to help, meet in his office at the firm, or have lunch to answer questions.

Research Questions

The following questions were addressed in this study:

1. How did the early years of William F. Winter's life from birth until graduation from law school prepare him for the battles he would fight to gain educational reform in Mississippi in 1982?

2. What were the political risks that he took from 1947 when he was elected to the Mississippi Legislature until he was elected governor in 1980 that led to a paradigm shift in the attitudes of all Mississippi voters?
3. Who was in favor of reform and who was against it, and how did William F. Winter change the minds of those not willing to change?
4. How did William F. Winter lead a reform effort that had been defeated and ignored during his first two years as governor to conclude with passage of the Educational Reform Act in December 1982?

Design of the Study

Methodological decisions faced in social research are complex. Qualitative design provided the researcher with alternatives for describing, interpreting, and explaining the operation of educational phenomena within the social setting. Qualitative research is an approach to studying problems and processes in life and in this case politics. “These studies are characterized by the investigation of a small, relatively homogeneous, and geographically bounded study site” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p.17); by use of participant observation, supplemented by field notes (Wilson, 1977); by creation of data from field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992); and by a preoccupation with interpretive description and explanation of the culture, life ways, and social structure of the group under investigation (Wolcott, 1988). Case study (Borg & Gall, 1989) provides a complete picture of the environment and possible new insights, and an opportunity to be involved in the context of the setting. Qualitative research is used for evaluation, for descriptive

research, and for theoretical inquiry. The outcomes of qualitative research contributed to the improvement of educational and school practices in several ways.

Case study analysis is appropriate for intensive, in-depth examination of one or a few instances of some phenomena. It is differentiated from other research designs by what Cronbach (1975) called interpretation in context. Case studies are a form of descriptive, non-experimental research, describing data over a period. The case study design addresses the problem of relevance in the social context. The case study appeal is the understanding that all of the variables cannot be separated (Yin, 1984).

According to Merriam (1998), the decision to focus on qualitative case studies arose from the fact that researchers were interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation. By concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity, the researcher can uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon. Borg and Gall (1983) emphasized that observational case studies usually focus on some part of an organization. Yin (1984) noted that case studies, unlike experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. In this sense, the case study, like the experiment, did not represent a “sample”, and this researcher’s goal is to expand and generalize theories (analytical generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization).

The search for understanding for this study is to utilize the holistic pattern of meaning. Each system has its own complexities. The focus of the William Winter study is confined to the research problem while emphasizing the unity and wholeness of the system. The investigator used a case study design in order to gain an in-depth

understanding of the situation and its meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, context rather than specific variable, discovery rather than confirmation (Yin, 1984). The researcher became the main research instrument as he observed, asked questions, and interacted with and read about research participants (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The case study method had the potential for the researcher to gather extensive data that could lead to further studies. This type of research offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of educational improvement (Merriam, 1982). Skager (1971) stated, "Acquired knowledge inevitably leads to changes in beliefs, objectives, and practice." The data and information collected should be able to answer the research questions and more.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study of William Winter, his life, and his time as political figure in Mississippi was two fold: to demonstrate the effects of the early years of life in shaping an individuals beliefs, philosophy, and values, and to record in detail the four years while William Winter was governor of Mississippi and how his efforts changed the face of education in Mississippi's public schools and changed the attitudes of many of the traditional, "Old South" thinkers. The study addresses and correlates the two factors of race relations and attitudes in Mississippi with the value of changing the education climate to improve the state of Mississippi socially, politically, economically, and educationally.

Significance of the Study

William Winter's efforts in reforming education demonstrated how the efforts of one man and a belief in the human spirit could change a state. This study documents how William Winter effected change with a vision, a plan, and hard work. It will indicate a love for a state and its people and how time invested would improve the state itself. The study, while being an important chapter in the history of Mississippi, demonstrates how a crusade to improve race relations and education can and will reform the attitudes of a state. The political rhetoric that often occurs when controversial issues are debated often leads to failure because of lack of communication. Winter was perceptive enough to understand that those closest to the problem should be involved in solving the problem hence he called for a series of nine public forums where politicians and constituents would be forced to meet face-to-face and discuss the needs of Mississippi.

This Act catapulted Mississippi to the front of the education reform movements that swept through the United States in the decade of the 1980's. Several other states used the model developed in Mississippi to achieve reform (Nigh in Oklahoma and Riley in South Carolina). An interview with several of the key players never has been collectively documented with a national perspective even though they are an essential part to the history of education reform and racial reconciliation in the state of Mississippi.

Politicians can benefit from this study by using it as a pattern to connect politicians with their constituents to hear first hand the good and the bad of current legislation being discussed. Educators can benefit from this study by using it as a study in perseverance by a politician who believed firmly in what he was doing and would not

give up until his goal was accomplished. In addition, the study is a contribution to what leadership is all about by demonstrating to an educator the importance of servant leadership, work ethic, and vision with direction, persistence, and patience.

Rationale for Case Study

As a case study, research is confined to the examination of a specific, bounded system such as an event, a person, and a group of people or an institution. It is this choice of subject(s) to be studied, not the methods used, that distinguishes a case study. This study was undertaken to understand the particular situations that led to the Educational Reform Act of 1982 and to provide insights into issues surrounding race relations and educational reform as they worked in orchestra with each other to bring about needed change. Framing inquiry as a case study allowed this researcher to wrestle with questions that are integrally tied to the social context which is conceptualized as a complex entity composed of interrelated physical, economic, historical, and ethical issues (Stake, 1994).

Summary

William Winter changed the face of education while improving education in Mississippi in 1982. The journey began, for him, not in 1947 when he entered politics, but in 1923 when he was born on farm in Grenada and grew up with black friends and was educated in the public school there. This study will follow the efforts of William Winter from 1923 until that day in December 1982 when the Educational Reform Act was passed in the Mississippi Legislature.

CHAPTER IV

WILLIAM WINTER'S STORY

Early Years

How did the early years of William F. Winter's life from birth until graduation from law school prepare him for the battles he would fight to gain educational reform in Mississippi in 1982? William Winter describes his childhood as being that of a typical young white boy. He grew up in Grenada County, Mississippi, playing with black children and not really knowing any differences existed between the two races. Those early years Winter was taught by his parents to treat everybody with respect and courtesy. Winter's parents were older than parents of his peers. His father was 51 years old when he was born. Both of his parents were teachers and his father farmed. His mother was a teacher for 20 years before she married William's father. Winter's father was a college graduate which according to him was a rarity in 1923. He graduated from Iuka Normal Institute in Iuka, Mississippi. During Winter's childhood, his father served in the Mississippi Legislature for several years. Winter recalls the numerous days spent in Jackson watching the Mississippi House and Senate in action. He also remembered how excited he was to have spent time on the floor of both houses, sitting in the chairs of the various legislators. He admits that he enjoyed the time spent in the public galleries watching the legislative process take place (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004). It was those experiences that led Winter to want to be a legislator some day.

While his father introduced him to politics, his mother brought focus to the importance of education to his life. Initially, when Winter became school age he was scheduled to go into Grenada and attend public school. When his parents found out who the teacher was going to be, they were not at all pleased with the quality of instruction he would receive. Winter's father went to work and cleaned, patched, and made ready a one-room shed on the side of the family barn where he would start school with his mother as the teacher. Winter recalls vividly, and with a wry smile, the morning routine of getting up, having breakfast, doing the morning farm chores, and following his mother out the back door to the barn to begin the school day.

Starting with second grade and continuing through sixth grade, Winter was bused to Kincannon, Mississippi, where he attended school in a one-room school with nine other students. Most of Winter's classmates only attended until the completion of sixth grade (W. Winter, personal communication, 1992). Winter, because of the emphasis placed on education by his parents and his thirst for knowledge, was the first person in the history of Kincannon School to later finish high school. Winter said that while he was not aware of black and white issues, he was curious as to why his black childhood friends never went to school past the sixth grade. On the wall in Winter's office, in a prominent place, is a painting of the Kincannon one-room schoolhouse that provided him with much of the foundation for his formal education. Many times in speeches later in his career, Winter would reference that little schoolhouse and the nine classmates he went through school with. He would readily admit that he was not the brightest of the class, but he had the impetus and support of his parents to finish. The reason Winter felt that his classmates

never completed their formal education was due to the many inadequacies of the public school system and the low expectations and opportunities for his black classmates. Those years spent playing and going to school with young black children made a lasting impression on him, and in many ways formulated the thinking that would allow him to strongly influence education as governor of the state. He said,

I understood at an early age that if I was ever going to make anything of my life, it was going to be based on having a proper education or at least the best education I could get. I've had the basis since then to compare what my life has been like with those boys and girls whom I grew up with there in that rural Grenada County area who didn't go to school, who dropped out, who were not encouraged to go to school – many of them dropping out as early as the third, fourth or fifth grade. Seeing those people not able to live a very satisfactory life conditioned me when I became an adult to the importance of education. I realized that some of us who had had good opportunities must some how transmit that sense of importance of education to other people, so from the first time I went to the Legislature, I made improved education the highest item on my priority list. (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004)

Winter's grades came easy to him due to his parents and teachers' expectations and his desire to learn and succeed. He read any and everything he could get his hands on. He had a strong preference for *The Memphis Commercial Appeal*. In reading the newspaper, Winter was able to live vicariously the world of professional baseball. Winter, like many young boys, was attracted to baseball and all of the statistics of the game. He was quick to relate that he could recall the starting lineups for all the major league teams during the 1940 baseball season (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

Winter, for many years after his term as governor, acted as the master of ceremony for the Mississippi Coaches Association Hall of Fame banquet. It was because of his love of sports and his love for high school basketball that he was made an honorary

member of the Mississippi High School Coaches Hall of Fame (G. Austin, personal communication, October 5, 2004).

In addition to his love of reading, Winter loved to write and was the editor of the Grenada High School newspaper. While in high school, he was active in academic competitions. He won the English award three consecutive years. He also loved the study of physics and won many awards in competitions on that subject. Winter said he worked long and hard for his grades for fear of disappointing his parents and teachers. In 1940, William Winter graduated from Grenada High School as valedictorian. He had scholarship offers from Millsaps and The University of Mississippi and chose to attend Ole Miss because all of his friends were going there (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

While at the University of Mississippi he was, by his own admission, not as good a student as he should have been, but he enjoyed all of the fruits of the college life. His undergraduate major was political science. He graduated in three years. While an undergraduate at the University of Mississippi, Winter enrolled in ROTC. World War II was well underway when he graduated in 1943. He left immediately for basic training in Florida. Shortly after his arrival, he was accepted in the Infantry Officer Candidate School held in Georgia. Winter was in an initial class of 201, out of which only 71 completed the course. William Winter finished first in the class. He then was sent to Fort McClellan, Alabama. While at Fort McClellan, Winter was assigned to an African-American infantry-training unit in the Army. This was an Army experiment in integrating its officers' corps. He lived the day-to-day military routine with black officers from

several different parts of the country. During the week Winter and the Black soldiers would train, talk, eat, and study side by side. On the weekends when the soldiers would gain some liberty away from the post, they would go to Anniston, Alabama. When the train picked up the soldiers, Winter would sit in the front while the Black soldiers of equal rank and military stature were made to go “to the rear of the train.” In town, the same walls of separation were present in form of hotels for Blacks as well as restaurants, bathrooms, and drinking fountains. Winter states that this period of time played a huge role in the development of his racial attitudes. He said:

Out of that relationship, I came to realize that what we had in the South was not a normal relationship. I began to see black people in a different way. I did not change a great deal my political attitudes, but it did establish for me a basis to understand that conditions would change in the South and that segregation would be eliminated in due time. I was conditioned to recognize and understand that as the inevitable and something that needed to happen. (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004)

He would continue in this position until 1945, when he was sent to the Philippines. En route to the Philippine Islands, word came that the Japanese had surrendered and World War II was over. Winter, since he was new in his assignment and his seniority was low, did not get to come home immediately. He was assigned the task of helping the military reduce its forces in a systematic manner. Winter was in the Philippines from October 1945 until the following July 1946. He was in one of the last groups to leave the Philippines and return stateside. At the end of the war, the Army discharged Winter as a captain and he joined the National Guard after he returned to Mississippi. Like so many other veterans of that time, he returned to college—this time law school (*Winter returns to law school*, 1957). During his first year of law school,

Winter ran for a seat in the Mississippi House of Representatives. The House met every two years which made it easier for Winter to participate while still in school. His opponent was a fellow Grenadian and the incumbent, E.G. McCormick, who had served four terms in the House. Winter described himself as the candidate for “able, alert, aggressive representation.” Despite McCormick’s experience, Winter enjoyed the advantage of being the son of a former legislator as well as returning war veteran. He won the election by nearly a three to one margin in the fall of 1947 (W.Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

The impact of December 7, 1941 was very evident. When asked about his remembrances of the day, Winter said:

I remember it very clearly. I was at Delta State University for an Ole Miss basketball game on Saturday, December 6. The next morning, Sunday December 7, 1941, we got up, had breakfast, went to church, sat down for Sunday lunch when the radio relayed the news of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. (With a pained expression he continued) It was a depressing ride back to Oxford. We did not speak about it, but we knew what was happening. The next day on Monday, December 8 we had an assembly in the chapel where we listened to President Franklin D. Roosevelt address a joint session of Congress and give his famous “Day of Infamy” speech. (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004)

Governor Winter was quick to add that while December 7, 1941 had had a tremendous impact on him and his personal life, another date that affected him almost as much was November 22, 1963. Winter recalled that he had campaigned for Jack Kennedy when he was running for President here in Mississippi, and was on that fateful day in Washington having lunch with the legislative liaison of Mississippi, Senator John Stennis. The radio gave the initial report of President Kennedy being shot in Dallas. Winter said the tension and grief was so thick it was as if a veil had been pulled over the

top of Washington, D.C. Winter said that November 22, 1963 was a time when we were all, no matter what our age, losing our innocence and we knew that from that point it would never be the same again and indeed it wasn't (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

As previously stated, after his discharge from the Army Winter returned to Ole Miss and entered law school. He stated that he always wanted to be a lawyer, as had his father. His father had financial commitments and was needed to do the farm work which did not allow him to attend law school. Winter said law school was marvelous. He enjoyed the academic rigor and study. He was editor of the Ole Miss Law Review his last year in law school.

Winter was asked to identify those two or three individuals who had the most profound impact on his life. With a sparkle in his eye, Winter leaned back in his chair and said that without question the person, other than his parent(s) who had impacted him the most was his high school English teacher, Estelle Turner at Grenada High School. She challenged him in ways that he had never been challenged. She was very demanding, hard, and fair. Winter with resounding respect, said that he thinks of her almost every day and even though she has been dead nearly thirty years, her impact on his life can never be over estimated. She came to, and was a participant in his inauguration as governor. As a result of her impact, Winter instituted an award, the Estelle Turner Award at Grenada High School, given each year to the student/athlete who has the highest academic average. Winter said it would be difficult to quantify her impact on his life. Winter mentioned also Huey Howerton, a political science professor at Ole Miss and Jim Silver,

a history professor at Ole Miss who wrote a book, *Mississippi: The Closed Society*, which was an indictment of the way the state of Mississippi had handled the racial strife issues. The book was so controversial that Ole Miss fired Silver who went on to the University of Notre Dame. With a wry smile, Winter said that when he became governor he hosted a dinner for Silver to tell him how much he appreciated him. Winter got great pleasure in having Silver return to Mississippi to be honored.

The final person Winter mentioned was Bob Fairly, who was Dean of the Ole Miss Law School, as another who had great influence on his early life (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

The happenings of Winter's early life had a profound impact on him and his view of the importance and value of formal education. Winter, although convinced himself, understood that his belief in education was not accepted state wide, especially in rural counties. Many of the farmers felt that educated experts in agriculture had never raised a crop, but had only studied it in books. The feeling that education would be a threat to the satisfaction of farm life was pervasive. This was especially thought to be true of black children. Problems in society would be magnified if too many blacks were educated (Winter, 1981).

Winter, while serving in the legislature, began to think about running for governor. He said:

In the middle 1920s, Mississippi elected a professional educator as governor. He had been state superintendent of education and resigned as president of one of the state universities to run for governor. He had a positive effect on public education, raising the quality of education in the state, and then we plunged in the depression and World War II. It was 30 years before another governor came along who gave more than lip service to education and then only as a response to Sputnik. In the

1960's I was presumptuous enough to think that I could do something about education as I ran for governor. (Winter, 1981)

Political Risks

Many were the political risks that he took from 1947 when he was elected to the Mississippi Legislature until he was elected governor in 1980. The work of Winter led to a paradigm shift in attitudes of all the Mississippi voters. William Winter was elected to the state legislature in 1947 by a three to one margin. Joining him in the legislature were thirteen of his University of Mississippi classmates. Seventy-eight of the 140 members of the new House of Representatives were recent election winners. Winter began to immediately take a role in introducing legislation. His first bill dealt with one of his primary concerns, education (*House Journal*, 1948).

In 1950, United States Senator John C. Stennis invited Winter to come to Washington as his legislative assistant. The two had met in 1947 in Grenada while Stennis substituted for Circuit Judge James P. Coleman. Shortly thereafter in 1950, Winter accepted the Senator's invitation to work in Washington which marked a long political alliance and friendship.

Winter had numerous duties as well as having almost daily contact with a U.S. Senator. While working for Stennis Winter was recalled to active duty at the beginning of the Korean War. Until 1952, he was stationed at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. When Winter's father died in March of 1952, he was discharged from the U.S. Army. He was again quickly and easily chosen to be a state representative by the people of Grenada County. He served until 1954 when he ran un-opposed for re-election. The ease with

which Winter won re-election prompted him to run for Speaker of the House, which he later called “one of the brashest things” he ever did (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004). Winter announced that he would challenge Walter Sillers, Jr. for the position of Speaker of the House. Siller had held office since 1944 and was a powerful figure in Mississippi politics according to Winter. Winter, along with a handful of younger members of the House, believed that Sillers was too conservative and tyrannical. Winter declared that Mississippi needed to be a “more forward-looking legislature.” He believed the state was tired of its current speaker, who, Winter charged, used his position to push through legislation he favored. The Grenada representative argued it was not the speaker’s role to “determine the fate” of certain legislation, stating that “the membership of the House is a forum where those matters should be decided” (W. Sillers, personal papers, January 4, 1956).

Throughout the fall and winter of 1955, Winter campaigned for support from his fellow legislators. His candidacy received a hefty boost by the rumor that Governor-elect James P. Coleman would support him. The future governor admitted that “Winter took the stump in my behalf and played a most important part in my election in both the first and second primaries.” Their friendship was well known in political circles, and Winter said Coleman had encouraged him to make the race for House Speaker (W. Winter, personal communication, 1981).

Most politicians and journalists in Mississippi tended to favor Sillers’ chances for re-election because of his long career and strong power base. The possibility that Coleman might support Winter was a source of some concern to Walter Sillers. As a

result, Sillers and his supporters began to seek written pledges of support. In a letter to his close friend, Representative C.B. “Buddy” Newman wrote, “We must continue our aggressive fight to get more members firmly committed to us. We should continue our endeavor to get letters, or telegrams sent, and signatures on the petitions” (W. Sillers, personal papers September 15, 1955). This same Buddy Newman would in 1982 provide Winter with the leverage to call a special session of the legislature because of a controversial voice vote that eventually led to the Educational Reform Act of 1982.

When the legislature convened in 1956 Sillers defeated Winter by a 94 to 40 margin. Afterward, Winter stated that the race had been a “wholesome thing” and he had “no apologies” for running and “no animosities” for the loss (*Winter’s Loss*, 1956). As a result of his friendship with Coleman, Winter was appointed Tax Collector. He was re-appointed again in 1959. Because his duties were light, he had time to devote to his hobbies of being an amateur historian and an active member of the Mississippi Historical Society. He also served as vice-chairman of the Mississippi Bar Association. He held the position during the late 1950s when integration in the South was an issue of paramount importance.

The forced integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, and the arrival of the National Guard provoked angry responses from most southern politicians. Mississippi Senator Stennis argued that this federal intervention was unconstitutional. Despite his belief in cooperation among races, Winter agreed with the senator and with others who said forced integration was wrong. He and his associates of the Mississippi Bar Association drafted a document entitled “Get the Schools Out of the Courts and Get

the Army Out of the Schools.” In the document they denounced the procedure of sending in troops as “unconstitutional, abusive, illegal, and unnecessary (Mississippi Bar Association, 1957-59).

In 1958, when the Democratic Party indicated it would support the Supreme Court’s 1954 *Brown vs. the Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas* decision, a number of Mississippi Democrats threatened to break with the party as they had done in 1948. Winter agreed with those who warned that third party would isolate Mississippi and leave it without any valuable friends. He became a voice of moderation and calm in the state. He made a series of addresses urging Mississippians to support the national Democratic Party. Winter stated that he would support the Democratic Party because he was a Mississippian, and Mississippi had benefited under Democratic rule. Remaining loyal to the Democratic Party, Stennis, and John F. Kennedy citing a need to seek positive change and cooperation between Mississippi and the nation, Winter would be unwavering in his support (Winter Refuses to join Council, 1980).

Winter’s performance as Treasurer was perhaps overshadowed by his emergence during this period as a racial moderate, which in the early 1960’s in Mississippi translated into a racial liberal. Unlike his mentor, John Stennis, who believed in the sovereignty of individual states, William Winter encouraged Mississippians to obey federal laws. He spoke out against the violent resistance that James Meredith, a black man, encountered in 1962 when he enrolled at the University of Mississippi. Winter also refused to join the White Citizens’ Council, which was born in Mississippi as a grassroots organization of non-violent southern whites who strongly opposed integration (Clarion Ledger, 1980).

Winter spoke out against the violence that had occurred on the campus of his alma mater when the first African-American enrolled there. He argued that in order to maintain peace, law, and order, “other solutions must be found for the ever present problems of race relations than the bull-whip and the shotgun.” Winter appealed to Mississippians and to their leaders to move forward in race relations:

The political leader who can successfully turn his people from a preoccupation with the race issue and all of the supercharged emotions of anxiety, fear, and hate which that issue suggests, will, in my opinion, have served well the cause of Southern statesman-ship and helped to put his region on the road to a happier and better day. (W. Winter, personal communication, March 14, 1992)

As a result of such comments, some conservatives in Mississippi viewed Winter as a liberal, while he classified himself as a moderate or a political realist. Winter argued that it was not only unrealistic but also unproductive for Mississippi to waste its energy fighting federal mandates. Although he recognized that his opinions were not altogether popular, he maintained that in order for Mississippi to progress it must lose its isolationist attitude. Winter often stated that Mississippi was in a period of transition, and he disliked the fact that many of his colleagues over-reacted to needed change (W. Winter, personal communication, March 27, 1963).

Conversely, Winter seemed to embrace the possibility of change and stressed the need for educational and economic improvements. He proclaimed that Mississippi could compete with the rest of the nation only if it improved its educational opportunities. Winter worried that the state’s current educational requirements were no longer adequate and encouraged southern politicians to make advancement in education their first priority (Education top priority, 1965).

Winter, while backed by the educators, lost the election to former Congressman John Bell Williams. Winters platform during the election included raising teacher's salaries, recruiting and hiring better teachers and the making of Mississippi schools a viable alternative to other southern states' school. Governor Williams took the lead of Winter to increase taxes to improve public schools. In many ways this was the beginning salvo that Winter would fire to the public of Mississippi about the need to change and improve education (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

Winter opened his campaign for governor by again declaring that Mississippi must have better schools, more jobs, and a more firm control of local affairs. Winter had a series of plans called "Winter Plans" designed to address Mississippi's problems and to produce an orderly process to solve the problems.

As he had done in his early political years, Winter stressed the importance of education. He said that in order to improve education the state legislature must give the teachers and schools more support. He said that he would raise salaries and do so without a tax increase by streamlining the tax support system in the state and the operation of the schools. He also wanted a compulsory attendance law. He argued that if Mississippi was ever to improve and get off the bottom, it would be necessary for all the children to not only be in school, but stay in school (W. Winter press release, 1967).

Winter not only targeted students in secondary schools; he also wanted to seek provisions for those young people who wanted to attend college. He proposed creating a fund of \$100,000 garnered from private sources to guarantee low cost loans for high school students who wanted to attend an institution of higher learning. He continually

sought improvement in education so that economic reform would result as well (W. Winter press release, 1967).

In order to finance the needed changes in education Winter sought to lure talented and educated Mississippians back to the state to live and work. He also wanted to create an advisory group of retired executives to assist in recruiting new businesses and industries for the state. He also sought to improve the agricultural climate in the state by attempting to attract new food processing plants. In addition, he sought to improve the highways of the state through a “dynamic new road building program.” Finally, Winter sought more opportunity for the women of Mississippi. He attended coffees and luncheons with his wife and appealed to them for their support (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

From the beginning of the race, he stood out as a moderate among his running mates. He referred to himself as a segregationist and a conservative who sought to discuss and focus on nonracial issues (Black, 1976). Three of the other candidates for governor campaigned as strong segregationists and worked to turn Winter’s moderate stance into a negative factor. They insinuated that he was lenient on issues involving race and was sympathetic toward African-Americans. They suggested that Winter would be the recipient of the black vote created by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (“Winter to Receive Black Vote”, 1967).

Ross Barnett rallied the people for home rule in Mississippi and often included the theme of “racial integrity” in his address. If elected governor, Jimmy Swan of

Hattiesburg promised free, racially segregated, private schools for all white Mississippi children. During the campaign, he remarked:

I pledge that within 12 months after I take office my plan free, private, segregated schools for every white child in the state of Mississippi will be in operation, or I will resign the office of Governor and apologize publicly (Daily Sentinel Star, 1967).

Also standing firm against integration was John Bell Williams. The United States congressional representative pledged to preserve the dignity and sovereignty of Mississippi. He campaigned against the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's school desegregation guidelines and the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson. Williams announced that voters must decide "whether Mississippi will go down the road of Socialism with the Great Society (Johnson's plan) or stand firm on the bed-rock of conservatism and constitutional government with John Bell Williams (Black, 1976).

Although Ross Barnett charged that William Winter was the bloc vote candidate and had the support of Robert Kennedy, John Bell Williams was the most ardent opponent of Winter (Black, 1976). Williams insisted that Winter was too liberal for Mississippi and was the candidate of President Lyndon B. Johnson, who was disliked by Mississippians because of his views on race relations. The congressional representative's supporters distributed handbills proclaiming that "if William F. Winter is elected governor, the Negroes will run Mississippi." Winter's liberal image stemmed from the fact that during the early 1960's he had advised Mississippi citizens to obey the national civil rights laws when most politicians were strongly opposing them (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004). Neither he nor his advisors had foreseen that race relations would be such a central issue in the campaign. For the first and only time in his

public career, Winter said that he purposely veered to the political right in an attempt to capture a political victory.

Rather than joining the name-calling, Winter vowed to stay close to the issues no matter what the other candidates did. In press conferences, he revealed that the people of Mississippi were reacting favorably to his campaign and remarked, “Voters are a whole lot smarter than some of these ranting, raving politicians give them credit.” Although Winter did not address any particular candidate by name, he did make several comments during his rallies which were obviously directed at John Bell Williams. In a June campaign speech he charged that while his plans had evolved over twenty years of service in Mississippi government, the “candidate from Washington D.C. hasn’t the faintest inkling of a program to help this state. He spends his time talking about his opponents, but he has very little to say about his program or his record”. Winter continued:

The candidate from Washington D.C. spends his time talking about William Winter. If I had spent 21 years playing footsie with the Washington D.C. crowd and had nothing to show from a \$30,000 a year salary...I would want to talk about somebody else too. (W. Winter, press release, 1967)

Despite his attempts to ignore attacks from his opponents, Winter eventually countered with a statement describing himself as a “fifth-generation Mississippian” who was “born and raised a segregationist.” Nevertheless, he appealed to his fellow citizens to abide by the law and to avoid “the extremist and fruitless defiance of federal mandates on civil rights” (Clarion Ledger, undated). In order to perhaps reassure older, more established Mississippi voters of his moderate position, Winter professed a “Jim Eastland-John Stennis Democrat.” Like these men, he stressed “strong, calm leadership”

and the right of Mississippi to handle its own affairs at the local level (W. Winter press release, 1967).

To back up this statement, Winter announced another plank in his platform to retain home rule and to protect state rights. He argued that too many times in the past “poor leadership” and reckless actions” had jeopardized home rule and had made it impossible for Mississippi’s “enemies” to whittle away more of the state’s individual rights.

In outlining the key points of his plan, Winter’s press release listed the need for strict law enforcement, full support of legislative action in Congress, an information program to present a “true picture” of Mississippi to the rest of the United States, and “will-to-win leadership” from the governor’s office. He explained that under this plan, state government would give full cooperation and assistance to local law officers to prevent rioting and crime. The response was a direct response to John Bell Williams’ promise to handle the riotous student outsiders and civil rights leaders present in Mississippi. Winter declared, “We will not permit inside or outside agitators to break our laws or cause violence and bloodshed. We will not fan the fires (of protest) through loud threats, phony headlines or behind the scenes scheming.”

In the weeks before the August primary, Winter expanded his law and order stance. Claiming that he was the leader needed to cope with the “agitators, goons, and beatniks” who invaded the state, the Treasurer vowed to go anywhere in Mississippi and back local police officers and the highway patrol to maintain peace (Winter, press release, 1967). Winter even proposed creating a highway patrol air unit for crowd control,

stating that strict handling of racial incidents and outside forces would preserve the order necessary for Mississippi to make gains on the economic front (Daily Sentinel Star, 1967).

When the ballots were counted, William Winter led in the first primary with over 218,000 votes. John Bell Williams followed with over 194,000. Jimmy Swan was third, and Ross Barnett ran a surprising fourth. Because in Mississippi only the top two candidates go to the second primary, Winter and Williams would face one another in a runoff election (W. Winter, personal communication, 1967).

Winter and his campaign staff were optimistic about his chances for the governor's office in the days following the first primary. He led in forty-four counties and had the largest primary vote of any candidate in Mississippi history. Winter continued to campaign hard before the August 29th runoff. Winter's attacks on Williams became more forceful. He asserted that the choice between himself and Williams was very clear. Either Mississippians could vote for a man who had a proven record in state government or for a man who had "lost for Mississippi, quit, and come home." Winter further accused his opponent of piecing together borrowed planks from other candidates in order to produce some semblance of a platform. This effort, according to Winter, had resulted in a "catch-all, promise all, something for everybody affair" (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

William Winter trailed John Bell Williams throughout the second primary on August 29. With 2,028 of 2,124 precincts reporting on August 31, Williams had garnered nearly 363,000 votes to Winter's 304,000 ("The Congressional Career", 1967). The

much-anticipated black bloc vote had failed to materialize. Moreover, nearly the entire conservative, segregationist vote which had been split three ways in the first primary went to Williams in the second (McMillen, 1973). Winter conceded defeat, extended congratulations to his opponent, and pledged to support Williams if he defeated Republican Rubel Phillips for the governor's office, which he did (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

After his defeat, Winter returned to the private sector. He was considered for a federal judge's post but withdrew from that consideration. According to Winter he felt that "every man must march to the beat of his own drum" and "my most effective service, for now, lies in private practice of law (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

In 1970, according to Winter he was considering re-entering the political arena, but he was non-committal on announcing exactly where. During several speaking engagements, Winter did reveal that he had narrowed his choices to either governor or lieutenant governor. Deciding which was difficult because his previous campaign and loss was still fresh in his mind, and he did not want to suffer a similar fate. At one engagement, Winter remarked, "If the race issue is going to be an overriding factor in the next campaign, count me out." Winter said that the volatile race issue had hampered progress in the state of Mississippi and the "rhetoric" of some politicians had brought Mississippi enough adverse publicity. The fear of another racist campaign was not the only factor Winter considered in making his decision. He believed that current governor John Bell Williams' lieutenant governor would be his opponent and a formidable one at

that. Therefore, on May 13, 1971, William Winter announced his candidacy for lieutenant governor. He traveled the state campaigning on much the same platform as he had when running for governor. He tied much of the economic problem that the state was experiencing to a poor educational system. He also insisted that economic improvement must be a priority as well as a need for Mississippi to “win friends for Mississippi and increase its reputation in the rest of the country” (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

The race for the lieutenant governor’s post was not easy. Democrats Cliff Finch, a Batesville attorney and a former representative, and Elmore Greaves of Jackson, a staunch segregationist and prominent member of the Citizen’s Council, both challenged him. Winter had more experience in Mississippi, but as shown in the previous gubernatorial race, that meant little. According to Greaves, Winter presented himself as a segregationist in the 1967 campaign in order to gain white votes but secretly told African-American leaders that he favored integration. Greaves reported, “William Winter agreed to talk like a segregationist in order to fool the white people into voting for him, but the Negroes were to be informed his words were only a sham.” The Jackson candidate accused Winter of making political deals with black Mississippi leader Charles Evers. Greaves said, “the night before the election, when Winter was on state-wide television for half hour, Evers sent him a message, ‘Pour it on hard: we can take it.’” Greaves also suggested that Winter was the candidate of African-Americans and the white liberals in the 1971 campaign. Winter vehemently denied the accusation, charging that it was “more of the same old claptrap that we’ve heard before (Greaves says Winter, 1971).

Greaves soon lost credibility, according to Winter, and soon faded from the political scene. Winter and Finch were the remaining two serious candidates. Just before the Democratic primary Winter posed the following question: “Just who is the best qualified man to be lieutenant governor? Ask yourself this and there I will rest my case.” Winter won by nearly 100, 000 votes, and ran unopposed in the November general election and won the office of lieutenant governor (Who is qualified, 1971).

By the summer of 1974, most Mississippian assumed that Winter would run for the governor’s office the following year. Polls, according to Winter, revealed that the political climate was favorable for him. Several of his supporters financed a poll which showed that of a list of prospective candidates, including Republican Gil Carmichael and Cliff Finch, forty per cent of the voters would choose Winter. Moreover, the poll indicated that his support was well distributed throughout the state and that he had a broader political base than ever before (Winter election climate favorable, 1974).

As expected, William Winter announced his intentions to run for governor in the spring of 1975. At an April news conference, he fielded questions from reporters. When asked why he did not just remain lieutenant governor, Winter replied that while his present position was a powerful one, he wanted to be in the office “where the buck stops...where leadership really begins.” These statements seemed a bit inconsistent with previous statements about the importance of the lieutenant governor’s post, but William Winter did not want to concentrate on the past but on the future:

I like to think based on experiences I have had, the associations I have had, the knowledge of state government that I feel I have acquired, that I can have this sort of constructive influence that will result in a better performance, not just to

the Governor's office, but also of the process of government, state and local (W. Winter, personal communication, April 23, 1975).

Winter would run for governor again in 1975 opposed by Cliff Finch, and again he would use education as the mainstay of his campaign. The state of public education at that time was one of very low morale with very little public support in Mississippi. Finch would not debate the issue of education with Winter. His point of emphasis was better jobs for Mississippi citizens. Winter surmised that Finch never understood the direct correlation between education and jobs. Winter would later be counseled by a governor in another state nearby who told him that having education platform was not a good thing because it simply didn't carry a powerful enough backing to make it work(W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

Winter felt he underestimated how deeply demoralized the public schools were. "There was a strong feeling that nobody cared about them, and that we were really not competing very well with the rest of the country." This sad condition was prevalent at the same time demands for more well educated societies were accelerating (Mullins, 1992).

During the campaign, Winter emphasized the need for improved education, more efficient government, and industrial development. Although he confirmed that the two candidates appeared to agree on most issues, he reminded Mississippians that he had the most political experience. According to Winter he felt that because of his relationship with the legislature, he could persuade its members to enact reforms (Political Experience Important, 1975).

Finch was a trial lawyer who had been an enthusiastic supporter of Governor Ross Barnett in the 1960's; yet in 1975, he developed an image as the populist candidate of the

working man and of minorities. In a successful campaign strategy, Finch's consultants set up a series of workdays. Beginning with a day as a bulldozer operator, Finch would follow that by pumping gas, sacking groceries, operating a forklift, cutting pulpwood, and stamping prices on store goods. He adopted a black lunch pail as his symbol and placed it on the podium at all of his speaking engagements (Parker, 1988). Finch's campaign caught the attention of many Mississippians and caused concern in the Winter camp. Winter, by his own admission had never claimed to be an exciting campaigner, had a slogan, "William Winter: He's For Real." The slogan did not evoke the same imagination or response from the voters as Finch's theme. Winter challenged his opponent's workingman theme, calling it misconception. Arguing that Finch was not the only candidate who cared for workers, Winter reminded voters that he had co-authored the Workman's Compensation Act (Winter not exciting, 1975).

Both Finch and Winter gained a spot in the August 26, 1975 runoff. During the three weeks before the election, Winter repeatedly challenged Finch to debate claiming the voters needed to see how the two would handle themselves under pressure. Finch declined the invitations and continued to espouse his plan to be the friend of the ordinary man. The strategy proved to be successful and Finch defeated Winter by over 100,000 votes. This was largest defeat, by vote, in the history of the Mississippi governor's race. For the second time in ten years, William Winter had failed to become governor of Mississippi (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

Winter was asked if he would have or should have run the race differently. He reflected on the possibility that being lieutenant governor had harmed his chances:

The office involves political risks. I ran for it knowing that. It is an awful tough office to hold and be a candidate for governor. It is the nature of the office. You get charged with the negative of an administration and you do not get a lot of the credit for the pluses. It is ironic that a point when I think I possessed maximum ability to serve the people, I was unable to get this across to them. It was frustrating. But, I have no regrets. I haven't lost a minutes sleep about this race. In 1967, I was somewhat crushed. It was my first political loss. This time, it was frustration, not bitterness, or rancor. When asked by reporters about his future political plans, the lieutenant governor admitted, "Right now, it would be hard to conceive of getting back into politics" ("No more politics", 1976).

In January 1976, the legislature honored the outgoing lieutenant governor and his family in a ceremony in Jackson. It passed a resolution thanking Winter for his long career of service to Mississippi. Lieutenant Governor Winter responded that he would always "stand up for the integrity" of the state legislature, and he remarked that the past four years had been some of the "most satisfying of any in my life" (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

When his term ended, Winter rejoined his law practice, of which he was a full partner. After two defeats in one decade, the longtime Mississippi politician concluded that he would never be governor. For the next three years, Winter did not make a single political speech or get involved in politics (W. Winter, personal communication, 1992).

In March of 1979, several Winter supporters contacted the former lieutenant governor and encouraged him to run again for governor. Soon after, friends of Winter informed him that a random poll revealed that he had a strong chance to win the governor's office (W. Winter, personal communication, 1992). Winter began to ponder whether he should once again take a risk and run. Winter knew that he would be the clear underdog, while in previous races he had been the frontrunner. In April Winter hinted he might be a candidate, remarking:

There seems to be a feeling from some people that there is a vacuum in this race. A great many people are looking for a new candidate for governor and so far, no one seems to have come along who has caught the imagination of anybody. And I tend to agree. (Here he comes again, 1979)

Finally, in May, Winter confirmed that he planned to run for governor and would file the papers.

One of the major issues that influenced Winter to run was the administration of Governor Cliff Finch. Despite his creative campaign and eager promises of four years earlier, Finch had failed to be a productive or even respected governor. Mississippi politicians, journalists, as well as citizens criticized Governor Finch's political appointments. He placed many of his personal friends in office even though they lacked qualifications. Moreover, and according to Winter the strongest attraction to enter the race was the fact that he appointed individuals with strong Ku Klux Klan or White Citizens Council backgrounds to important policy making positions, but he never appointed any African-Americans to head a state department or agency (Steed, Moreland, & Baker, 1980). Two of Finch's aides were indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of corruption for mishandling state funds. This led Winter to believe that now was his time. Winter had had a record as an open, honest, and respected statesman. Winter appealed to the voters of Mississippi and he sensed this attraction. Winter hired a media consultant, Bob Squier, from Washington D.C. to handle his radio and television ads. With Squier's help, Winter planned to use his reputation as a trustworthy and honest politician to capitalize on the corruption theme ("A final run", 1979).

On June 7, 1979, Winter announced his candidacy for governor. He asked the people of Mississippi to join him in his effort to "restore honor and competence to state

government.” He informed his audience that he had not planned to run for governor, but had decided to enter the race only to offer a choice in the campaign. Winter insisted that a candidate had not emerged who offered the tough, independent leadership Mississippi needed. The state’s number one problem at that moment according to Winter, was lack of leadership (State needs a leader, 1979).

Winter became a tougher and more outspoken candidate than before. He criticized the Finch administration for its incompetence in and mismanagement of Mississippi’s government. He proclaimed that it was time to get rid of the state of corruption. When reporters asked if he was referring specifically to Finch, Winter answered, “I am referring to the whole malaise in government..., and I am offering leadership so that we can get away from the superficialities of campaigning and of government.” When journalists questioned whether or not his opponent, Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Gandy, was part of this corruption, Winter replied, “She is part of this administration and I would assume would have a responsibility for this administration”(Tougher stance taken by Winter, 1979).

Winter became the attacker as well as aggressor. He continued to hammer away at Governor Finch and declared that Mississippi was “ripped off” by poor top-level leadership. Pledging to restore confidence in state government, Winter said he would appoint qualified persons to state office only after an intensive background check to assure competence and honesty (Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal, 1979).

Winter again stated his belief that honesty in state government was number one issue in the campaign. He offered a program to restore integrity to Mississippi politics.

Winter vowed that if he were elected, Mississippians would never again have to question the honesty of their governor or be embarrassed by state government (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

In addition to stressing reforms, Winter unveiled a series of other programs during the campaign designed to improve Mississippi's economic and educational status. His "jobs of Mississippians" plan consisted of the following six-point strategy to encourage economic growth in the state:

1. A Job Opportunities Banking System (JOBS) to aid in funding for local economic development.
2. A sliding scale of tax incentives to offer greater tax breaks for high paying and high technology industries desiring to locate in Mississippi.
3. A governor's roundtable to assist the Agriculture and Industry Board in industrial recruitment.
4. A Coordinating Council on Economic Development personally led by the governor whose mission would be to coordinate activities of the Mississippi Research and Development Center, the A& I Board, the College Board, and the Department of Education.
5. A comprehensive plan of rural and agricultural development to push for the establishment of a division of rural development within the A & I Board.
6. A comprehensive Mississippi Product Export Program to stimulate the development of the international trade of state products (Mullins, 1992).

Throughout his political career, education had been the subject of personal importance to Winter, and it remained a key component of his 1979 platform. In a series of speeches in July, Winter outlined his plan to upgrade Mississippi's educational system. Introducing his proposal, the candidate explained:

If Mississippi is to have a future, our children must have a future in Mississippi. As your governor, I will work to build a strong school program for the 1980s which will lift Mississippi off the bottom and give our young people an education as good as any in the country (Mullins, 1992).

According to Winter a significant part of his education plan called "Operation Uplift," would include salary increases for all employees to the Southeastern average, a compulsory attendance law, expanded career counseling and vocational training, and a lay board of education to equalize funding and opportunities for all (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

Winter trailed Evelyn Gandy in the first primary by nearly 40,000 votes, but he was confident that he could win the run-off election. He felt that his late entry into the election had caused a lack of support in the first election. He also felt that by tying Gandy to the Finch administration he could publicize that he would be totally free from the corruption of the previous administration. According to Winter an issue that was of concern to the voters, but never mentioned by Winter, was the fact that Gandy was a woman and the talk in the press was that a woman might not be able to have a "killer instinct" or would be tough enough (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

As the runoff approached, Winter's support increased, and he was optimistic about his chances to win this third time. Shortly before the runoff, Winter explained the difference between the current race and his previous ones:

It is like daylight and dark. The last two times, I could feel it going against me, even though I was in the lead. Now I have the feeling it is really going my way. I think the momentum is with us. There is a feeling that this is my time (Feelings different this election, 1979).

The results of the runoff confirmed his predications. He defeated Evelyn Gandy by approximately 90,000 votes. He had significant strength in north Mississippi, particularly in the Delta, and captured the majority of the black vote. Winter was encouraged by the win and prepared to face Republican Gil Carmichael in the general election. Carmichael was politically inexperienced compared to Winter and tried to use that fact in his favor. He defined the race as a "choice between a lawyer politician tied to old politics or a businessman (Feelings different this election, 1979).

As the campaign progressed, the exchanges between Winter and Carmichael became more heated. During a televised debate, Carmichael charged that Winter had benefited economically from his twenty-five years of public service. Once again, he brought up the charge that Winter had used his position as lieutenant governor to enhance his bond practice and gain a monopoly in the field. Winter immediately dismissed these accusations, insisting that he never profited from state business. In his rebuttal, Winter argued that Carmichael's charges revealed his "lack of understanding of state government and the legal profession" (W. Winter personal communication, October 19, 2004).

During his third gubernatorial campaign, Winter attempted to attract all sections of the population. In addition to wooing the black voters, he worked to secure support

from Mississippi's youth, her elderly, her teachers, her industrial workers, and her farmers. Winter gained support and popularity among young people in large part because of the efforts of his twenty-three year old daughter, Elise. She took a leave of absence from her studies at the University of Mississippi to organize support for her father on college campuses. He was endorsed by the AFL-CIO and the Mississippi Association of Educators as he proposed programs to appeal to the members of the voting community (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

Emphasizing the needs and concerns of Mississippi's older population, Winter formulated a plan to assist senior citizens. He pledged to create a job bank for this group, to allow a tax credit for persons caring for elderly family members, and to develop income supplements for older Mississippians. In addition, Winter wanted statewide programs for store discounts, severe punishment for crimes against the elderly, and a program to provide senior citizens with transportation for medical reasons and for other local travel.

Hailing from a farm background, Winter had always considered himself a friend to Mississippi farmers. In the weeks before the election, he stressed this loyalty by outlining a plan to aid the state's farm communities. Winter proposed a state-funded assistance program which would help young families buy farms, would provide a tax break for retired farmers who sold their farms to young buyers, and would aid in marketing Mississippi's agricultural products by turning their promotion over to the State Department of Agriculture and Commerce (Mullins, 1992).

A long-time observer of Mississippi politics, Bill Minor spoke of the 1979 campaign:

Winning public office is often a combination of luck, timing, and shrewd campaign technique, but for William Winter, it seems to have been a matter of patience, waiting, for the day when Mississippi would be ready for him (B. Minor, personal communication, September 21, 2004).

Finally, Mississippi was ready for Winter. In the November 6 election, he defeated Carmichael by over 100,000 votes, capturing sixty per cent of the returns. He carried eighty counties, including Carmichael's home county of Lauderdale. At his victory party, Winter promised honest and effective state government and vowed to begin working at once on the next administration ("New Governor", 1979).

Only hours after the election, Winter met with his campaign staff to discuss some of his immediate plans. His first goal was to fill key positions in his administration with people who would restore respect to state government. Moreover, Winter announced his intentions to appoint African-Americans to head agencies and sit on boards. According to Winter, this challenge to the status quo of the Old South would lead to many furious fights over change and over legislation during the next four years. His second goal was to draft legislation outlined in his campaign and to find sponsors for it. Winter believed educational improvement was important when he was elected to state government in 1947 and remained consistent in his fervor for improving education in Mississippi now. In addition, Winter wanted his inauguration day to set the tone for his administration. Winter began planning the ceremonies and promised to make the day an exhibition of Mississippi's best talent. Finally, Winter wanted to revitalize the Democratic party in Mississippi. As its leader, he proposed the introduction of young, new leaders who were

more moderate on racial and governmental issues. Winter argued that it was time for the more conservative Democrats who had controlled the party for years to pass the reins to a new generation of more accepting Democrats. Having secured the top position in Mississippi politics at last, Winter summed up his feelings on the years ahead by saying, “I’m aware that a lot is expected of me and I expect a lot of myself. I haven’t been elected governor of Mississippi to mess it up” (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

William Winter had labored for the state of Mississippi and finally on January 22, 1980 William F. Winter was the governor of his native state. He summarized where he had been and where he was going as governor in his inaugural address:

I recognize the high privilege and I accept the opportunity that is presented to me here today to assume the governorship of the state of Mississippi. In doing so I would acknowledge first of all the obligation that I owe to all of you to justify my efforts the confidence that you have placed in me. I intend to do that, but I must also acknowledge that I need your continued support, your cooperation, your help and your prayers. I want to say specifically to the members of this joint assembly of the Legislature that it will be my purpose to work closely with you, to advise with you on a day-to-day basis and to contribute as much as I can to a harmonious and effective relationship between us. I also want to express my gratitude to my fellow elected state officials and to our distinguished United States Senators and Representatives, all whom honor me by their presence today and with who I look forward to working with in the service of the people of Mississippi.

I am honored, too, by the attendance at these ceremonies of the distinguished former governors of our state. Each of them has contributed in a unique way to the progress of Mississippi, and I recognize the responsibility which falls upon me to wear with dignity the mantle of leadership which they have transmitted to me. I would add finally how pleased I am that Miss Leontyne Price would honor us all by coming home for this occasion and singing so beautifully our national anthem.

Gathered as we are on this historic site, in front of a capitol building erected 140 years ago, I am conscious of the historic significance of this occasion, the uniqueness of this event, and responsibility that it imposes, stand before you today, as other governors have stood here, the last of whom, A.H. Longino, spoke

from this Capitol just eighty years ago. As he looked out on a January day that began a new century, little could he have foreseen the march of events that the intervening years would bring to this city, to this state, to this nation, and to this world. An yet, as we measure history, that was not a long time ago, and there are those in this audience whose life span encompasses those eighty tumultuous years.

I have not come here today, however, to reminisce or to look back, but I do as you to join me at this particular time and place in history to establish the proper perspective for deciding where we want our state to go. This involves the selection of those values and standards that will enable us to preserve our political system and to transmit to another generation of Mississippians a culture and a quality of life worthy of preservation. If you have come here today to hear from me answers or quick and pat solutions or glib and fancy promises, you will be disappointed, I ask you, my fellow Mississippian, to join with me on this day in an undertaking worthy of the best of our traditions to re-establish and to reassert the principle not only on which political institutions must rest but on which human character and human life itself must depend.

I said to you when I launched our campaign for governor that the time had come in Mississippi for us to lift our eyes from the dusty road and set our sights high on the mountainside of achievement – of achievement based on recognition of the dignity of every citizen and the worth of every individual. I repeat that request here today. I come as your governor, asking for your help in putting together in this state a quality of life, a spirit of purpose, a resolution of the will that will sustain us, not only in the weeks and months ahead, but that will lay the basis for the sustaining of the greatness of this state for future generations.

We have that unique opportunity. It is one of the God-given blessings that have come to us in the world where relatively few people have a choice as to what they will do with their lives. We have a choice. Here you and I in this good state have the power to decide which way we shall go. But to make those decisions we must have our priorities straight and our standards of values in focus. Let me share with you the resolution that I have made-the commitments that I have made to myself-commitments which I intend to live up to with all of the strength that God has given me-but commitments that I must have your help to carry out. There will be no place in this administration for anyone who is not utterly and impeccably trustworthy in all of his affairs and relations and activities with the people of Mississippi, their property and their possessions. There will be no place in this administration for bias or prejudice based on sectionalism or class or race or religion or anything else. There will be no place in this administration for mediocrity or shoddy performance or a half-done job.

I look down this long sweep of history-I look down Capitol Street here before me today, and in my mind's eye I see what other people in other years have paid for that enables us to meet peacefully here under these trees in front of this historic old statehouse. In my mind's eye, I see those old pioneers, including some of my own forebears, who came into this wilderness country in the early nineteenth century to carve out here on this bluff above the Pearl River a city-a civilized city-a beautiful city-and make it the Capitol City of a great state.

In my mind's eye, I see that state later shattered by the tragedy of civil war that turned neighbor against neighbor, and section against section, and saw great buildings lay to waste-this beautiful city put to fire and ashes-and out of that holocaust came a new spirit, came a new opportunity.

But there have been so many years that the locusts have eaten, when we still pitted ourselves against each other, white against black, rich against poor, businessman against farmer, the Delta against the Hills, south Mississippian against north Mississippian. We saw our beautiful soil stripped of erosion, our forests laid to waste, our rivers run red, our great natural bounty wasted before our eyes and we wondered why we did not prosper.

We have wasted too much time. We have wasted too much of our substance. We have spent too many of our years, too much of our energy being things we did not understand, being afraid of change, being suspicious of the intellectual, and being oblivious to our image and our reputation.

Now the time has come to get on with the job-long overdue-of building this state into the land of prosperity that it truly can be. That is what this inaugural is all about, and I want you to join me in making that promise here collectively to each other-that we shall not let any force divide us that will prevent us from achieving that ultimate level of promise and prosperity and progress that we all know deep down in our hearts in our rightful inheritance. I believe with all of the fiber of my being that the remaining twenty years of this century belong to this area of America-to this state beautifully and picturesquely named Mississippi. Let those syllables roll off your tongue, with the assurance that this is where the action is going to be. This is where the achievements of the future will lie. This is where we are going to harness our brainpower and our creativity and our ingenuity. This is where we are going to provide the leadership in scientific and social research in solving the problems that this country is desperately looking for somebody to solve. These will not be the years that the locusts have eaten. These will be the years of fulfillment and satisfaction and pride and accomplishment and assurance that we will be putting it all together, with one people united in an effort that has as its common bond a commitment to greatness.

As I said before, this will not be easy. No great purpose is easily achieved, but what greater purpose could untie us and send us confidently down the road of the future than the assurance that we have met the challenge of these last twentieth century years in helping solve some of the problems that haunt America today.

We say to our sister states, we have here what the rest of the nation is looking for-people who are willing to work-who don't want a free ride-who will settle for nothing less than a well-done job. That we have here the resources essential to the building of a self-sufficient nation. Resources of energy-resources of food-resources of fiber-resources of shelter-all that in a benign climate, where the living is good, and more important than anything else, a good spirit in our people, where bitterness has been put aside, where people do not ask, Where did you come from? or what club does he belong to? or what color is his skin? The question they ask is what can he do?

I consider that you and I form the most fortunate generation that has ever lived, even with the problems of inflation and energy and international tension and all the other difficulties that confront mankind.

As we look around us and count our blessings, this must represent for all of us the most exciting and stimulating time in which anybody could want to live, and that is the basis of the challenge I present to you here today-a challenge of making this state, without confrontation and without controversy, without self-pity and without any sense of inferiority, hold our heads up to the world and say, We are today ready, willing, able, and insistent on taking our full share of the responsibilities or leadership in this country. We will help do the work, we will help solve the problems, and we will insist on our share of the national benefits. We are going to meet our responsibilities. We are going to educate our people, take care of our handicapped, and provide for those indigent who cannot provide for themselves. We are going to help our senior citizens live in dignity and self-respect, and we are going to work for better health care and better housing and better transportation for all of our people.

We are going to strive to protect our natural resources and conserve our land and our forests and our streams. However, at the same time, we are also going to put our people to work in jobs that challenge their skills and pay them an adequate wage. We are going to demonstrate our commitment to hard work and tough discipline and long hours.

We cannot enjoy the luxury of letting up in Mississippi. We still have too much catching up to do. We have to run faster and get up earlier and stay up later to get where we want to be. This will not happen because we want it to happen, and it will not come about because of massive new governmental programs. It will occur only as enough of us are willing to struggle to make it happen. I want us to

stop selling ourselves short by not fully utilizing all of our people-our talented people-our creative and imaginative people. The old solutions will not do. Let us not be afraid to launch out into a new area. Let us not feel threatened by new ways of doing things.

I shall in the next few days ask this legislature for the privilege of presenting to another joint session some of my specific recommendations. They will be designed to help achieve the basic goals which I have set before you today. They will have as their major thrust the increased efficiency of state government, and making it more responsive to the legitimate needs of our people.

Let me say finally that throughout my administration I shall always remember that in occupying this high office I do as your servant. I shall accordingly always strive to serve you in a way that will reflect credit on you and that will insure increased respect for the State of Mississippi.

Another governor on another January day when I was a very small boy stated, what in the final analysis is the ultimate measure of our performance. I commend to you these words from the inaugural address of Governor Mike Conner in 1932:

And if in this hour we shall set the public welfare as the only goal of our ambition, if we shall make it the supreme object of our effort and dedicate to its achievement the best endowment of our lives, we need not fear for the results of our labors, nor for the future of the state. (Inaugural Address, 1980)

Soon after inauguration day, Winter huddled with the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House to consider not going forward with the third phase of this tax reduction. Lieutenant Governor Dye sided with Winter. Dye had been a long time friend and ally of Winter. When asked to recount the relationship, Dye said:

It could not have been a better relationship. William and I had grown up in the same neck of the woods, and even though we are not related, we have common kinsmen. But there is another reason why we have had such a wonderful working relationship. William called me the day after the election and invited me to come to his home and have breakfast on Thursday morning after he was elected on Tuesday, before he and Elise left town for a little vacation. And just the two of us met. He told me he wanted me involved in his administration, and he recounted to me his experiences when he was lieutenant governor and reminded me that after the inauguration, he never had another conversation with Governor Waller. And I remember going to see William and asking him to see Waller about something during the administration that I thought was of utmost importance in the state at

the time when William was lieutenant governor and I was treasurer. And William told me at that time he hadn't talked to the Governor since the inauguration. So, because of our past, we had known each other for a long time and both of us had represented Grenada in the legislature. William included me and involved me in his entire administration. Nothing he did that I can remember of any importance did he do without first running it by me. He did not always get my O.K., do not get me wrong. He didn't get my O.K., but, I was never in the dark about anything. (B. Dye, personal communication, 1991)

The other legislative leaders felt they had a moral obligation to proceed with all the tax cuts or their 1979 action would be regarded as political rhetoric in order to get re-elected. They would not under any circumstance think of taking suggestions on how to repeal the tax cuts. Winter saw that the State of Mississippi would run short of money very quickly in his term. He began exploring other sources of potential revenue.

In his opening message to a joint session of the legislature, Winter called for increases in teacher pay, better funding for the student transportation system and constitutional amendment creating an expanded board of education that would include citizen leaders in addition to those who were serving on the Board of Education. In keeping with his campaign promises, he also called on the Legislature to address school financing:

We must insist on getting maximum return for our tax dollar, and I think the time has come for an overall review of the basis of financing and administering our secondary and elementary school programs. As one who participated in the drafting and adoption of the Minimum Foundation Program in the early 1950's, I would ask you to consider a review of that program. I therefore recommend to you that a task force be created by act of the Legislature that would consist of member of the Legislature, members of the education profession and citizen leaders who would bring to the 1981 session recommendations with regard to amendments to the Minimum Foundation Program. (Mississippi Executive Department, 1980)

As the new Governor's four-year term began, there was a feeling of optimism despite the pessimistic feelings about revenue. Veteran newspaper columnist and political observer, Bill Minor, felt Winter brought to the Governor's Office unique experience with service in both houses of the legislature and having served as Lieutenant Governor. He said, "Winter knew a lot of the ways and mores of the Legislature. More so than anybody that I'd ever seen selected in over forty years of service." (B. Minor, personal communication, September 21, 2004)

One of the first steps Winter took when he repeated the oath of office was to appoint a committee to review the method of financing public schools. It was his opinion the current system passed in 1953 was an attempt to hinder any efforts at massive integration. Winter said the effort to integrate could be traced back as far as Speaker Walter Sillers who praised the University of Mississippi and Mississippi State University for withdrawing their basketball teams from tournaments in which African-Americans played (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005). Sillers himself was a member of the Sovereignty Commission said it was "wise" to withdraw. He said, "Our school authorities have acted properly to help pressure the keeping of Mississippi traditions and customs" (Johnston, 1990). Following Winters lead the legislature passed a concurrent resolution that created a Special Committee on Public School Finance and Administration. The committee was given the duty of reviewing all laws that related to school finance, to contemplate alternative methods, and report to the regular session of the 1981 Legislature its findings and recommendations. The committee was given a great deal of latitude in studying the issues (Mississippi House Concurrent Resolution, No. 105

1980). The committee was given \$50,000 to be used to study the issues from May 1980 until June 1981 (Mississippi House Bill No. 1344, 1980). The committee had less than nine months to complete their work since they were required to submit a report before January 15, 1981. The committee was instructed to include in the report any changes they recommended in the Minimum Programs of Education Law, the State Educational Finance Commission Law that related to transportation of students and laws that addressed vocational or special education. The committee could also identify any matters that it deemed significant in their report. The latitude was broad, but clearly financing of education was the driving issue. Membership of the Committee was twenty voting members with the State Superintendent of Education serving as a non-voting member. (Mississippi House Concurrent Resolution No. 105, 1980).

Governor Winter appointed eight members of the committee from Mississippi at large. They were Jack Reed, Ernest Madison (a teacher), Bobby Papasan, Claude Ramsay, Robert Walker, Wilmer Whittle, Martha Gill (also a teacher), and Robert Fortenberry (Report of Special Committee on Public School Finance and Administration, 1980). To those eight the Lieutenant Governor appointed six state senators: Gordon, Thames, Frazier, Purvis, Davis, and Anderson. The remaining six members to the committee were appointed by the Speaker of the House: Jackson, Pennebaker, Stubbs, Buelow, Clark, and himself (Report of Special Committee on Public School Finance and Administration, 1980).

Editorials in both the Biloxi and Jackson newspapers printed suspiciousness toward yet another “committee”. *The Daily Herald* in Biloxi did express a positive view

of Governor Winter being more dedicated to bringing about education reform than previous governors. (“Dedication positive for Winter”, 1980). *The Clarion-Ledger* was also optimistic because of dissatisfaction with the current state of education in Mississippi. The newspaper felt that more and more citizens were becoming concerned about education and were willing to support reform that would produce change instead of just another report. (“Citizens become concerned”, 1980).

The “Blue Ribbon Committee” first met on June 23, 1980. Governor Winter challenged the committee member to develop programs “that will produce the best possible educational system for the state.” Winter told the Committee that it had a real opportunity to do what had not been done in a long time, and that the work of the Committee “may well be the most far reaching, significant work of this administration.” (“Eight Appointed to New Committee”, 1980). Governor Winter, in an attempt to inspire the members of the Committee, told them “if this committee can’t come up with something by way of improving the administration of education, it can’t be done.” He concluded with a warning that the report could “well be relegated to some shelf somewhere as so many others have been.” (Anklam, 1980)

Several members of the committee saw Jack Reed as the person to chair the committee. They saw Reed’s leadership style as forceful but not confrontational. His sense of humor would make differences between the legislators tolerable. They also saw Reed as a man with a high level of moral standing and that instead of just having a meeting, they would be meeting to affect and perhaps even change the future

of Mississippi. Reed asked the committee members at first meeting what they hoped the committee would recommend. Knowing that nothing new would be found, he felt the need to poll the members anyway. Reed also said at the first meeting, “Where substantial reorganization has come about in the past, in Mississippi and in other states, it has come through very courageous action.” (Education Panel to Study Hot Potato, 1980)

The second meeting of the Committee was held July 14, 1980. Attorney General Bill Allain addressed the group and pledged support from his office. Allain was a key figure because of his position and influence with his allies. Secretary of State Ed Pittman also was invited to address the committee but declined. Reed later expressed disappointment that the committee did not receive support of Pittman. (Mullins, 1992).

During the time before the second meeting, educators from across the state met in Jackson to express their views on what they thought were the relevant and pressing needs of education. While many needs were listed, missing was any mention of one of the main planks of Governor Winter’s educational reform package: public kindergarten. The issue that not many black representatives of school districts attended is worth noting because they would be the focus of the need to implement kindergarten programs. While school finance continued to be a top priority conversation piece, Reed said that there was no point in trying to restructure school finance “until we had reappraised the property of the state, and if you took that position, we had to come up with some other studies and recommendations” (Mullins, 1992).

Winter did not interfere with the committee and its’ workings. Winter knew that funding for the education reform package would necessitate a tax increase and wanted a

broad base of support from the committee rather than just saying the governor wants to increase taxes to fund educational reform. When the committee did, according to Reed, bog down, or as he said, “bargained down,” he asked that Winter have the members come to lunch in the Governor’s Mansion. Reed always felt Winter would be ready to help. Winter only attended one or two meeting of the committee, but always had one or two of his staff at the meeting to show support and to make reports back to him (Mullins, 1992). At the seventh meeting of the committee on July 14, 1980, Senator Gordon presented a proposed bill that would recommend the establishment of a lay state board of education. Sixteen local superintendents had been asked their views on a lay board of education, and a majority of them favored a change in the then current structure. Testimony in favor of adding lay members came from the Mississippi Professional Educators, the American Association of University Women, the League of Women Voters, and Mississippi School Boards’ Association (Special Committee on School Finance Minutes, 1980).

At the ninth meeting of the full Committee on October 20, 1980, Robert Clark proposed a bill establishing a compulsory attendance law. There was unanimity on the issue of a compulsory attendance law. Winter strongly supported it as another step toward removing the problems caused by the “segregation hysteria.” (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005)

1980 saw little more than the creation of the Special Committee. Thirty-six bills were referred to the Education Committee in the Senate (Mississippi Senate Journal, 1980) and seventy-three to the House Education Committee (Mississippi House Journal, 1980). This was a light load of legislation, especially in the first full session after an

election. Bills introducing compulsory attendance and a lay board of education were introduced but soon died in committee. The only other significant piece of legislation that passed was a small salary increase for teachers of from \$245 to \$285 annually depending on their certification status. This bill was approved by Governor Winter on May 19, 1980 (Mississippi Senate Journal, 1980).

While little was accomplished on education compared to the expectations that Governor Winter had expressed in the 1980 session, the successful work of the Special Committee created some excitement for education supporters as the 1981 session opened. According to Winter he had to build a small base of support from respected citizens of Mississippi in order to gain a broad base of support for his reform plans. The *Clarion-Ledger's* third annual Legislative Survey conducted in December 1980 indicated that over fifty-seven percent of the legislators said they would not vote for mandatory kindergarten in the 1981 session. Over seventy-two percent of those responding to the survey believed that funding for schools needed revision, but offered no solutions as to how it should come about (Anklam, 1981).

Ray Mabus, Governor Winter's legislative liaison predicted a hard fight because "anytime you change the way you're going to distribute money you're going to get a fight" (R. Mabus, personnel communication, 2004). Some legislators began to question the practicality of implementing a high cost item such as kindergarten, especially during a time when revenues were down. Speaker of the House Newman said:

When we only have so much money, should we take this money and instead of increasing teacher salaries, should we raise the support for kindergarten? Frankly, I think it should be financed on the local level. There is a limit to what the state can do (Anklam, 1981).

While Governor Winter had not asked for any tax increases to fund his education reform movement during his “State of the State” address, many lawmakers saw this as a positive sign that the governor would work with them. A future leader in the reform effort and political ally of Winter, Jim Simpson of Long Beach said that he did not feel that Governor Winter had asked the Legislature for any new programs that could not be provided for within existing revenue. Simpson said, “It might stretch dedication some but not our capability. I think he asked us to expend more intestinal fortitude than he did money. If we can’t do that we ought not to be here” (Branston, 1981). According to Winter, he wanted to find out if the special committee could get a bill introduced and passed with or without a tax increase, or if there might be enough support directly from the legislature to pass the legislation without the influence of the special committee (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005).

The debate for state kindergarten raged during the early months of the 1981 session. Senator Bill Alexander said that it would be an early casualty. Alexander was from the same town and political base as former Speaker of the Mississippi House Walter Sillers, which impacted his desire or lack of desire for educational reform (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005). Senator Glen Dewese felt that money was too scarce for kindergartens to be a priority in the 1981 session. Others said that they felt the same way but they stated they felt that way about any new and costly programs (Tight money may block kindergarten, 1981).

Kindergarten bills were introduced in the House and Senate, yet eventually died in the Education Committee (Mississippi Senate Journal, 1981). Other “Blue Ribbon

Committee” bills were also doomed. Compulsory attendance bills were introduced. They met the same fate, death in the Education Committee (Mississippi House Journal, 1981). Changes in funding, textbook purchasing, trustee election consolidation, and small increases in funding did pass, but failed to meet the goal of educational reform (General Laws Mississippi, 1981).

The heart of the “Blue Ribbon” Committee’s recommendation had been killed by actions of the legislature. By March of 1981 the main proposals of the committee were dead. Reasons for the failure of the programs were many and varied. Some said it was because of a poor funding formula, some said it was lack of resources, some said it was from lack of public support, and some said they would not be for raising taxes. Many legislators said that reappraising of property had not been completed so they did not have a real handle on exact amounts of money available (Anklam, 1982). According to Winter, some of the “Old South” political figures simply did not want to address the reforms to improve the possibilities of higher levels of education for the poor whites and blacks. The failure to address the real source of failure of efforts to improve education would never be publicly stated, which led Winter to create a completely new plan to gain the needed change in the system (W.Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005).

Newspaper columnist Paul Pittman placed a majority of the blame on the failed efforts on Governor Winter’s style of working with the Legislature. Pittman said that Winter did not operate in the “kind of wheeling and dealing, slash and cut, *quid pro quo* politics” that was necessary to see true reform come about. He said that Winter would have even more difficulty passing educational reform measure because of his failure to

alter his style of thinking that indicated right would always prevail. Pittman wrote, “They speak well of his benevolent attitude and his commendable grey eminence, all the while politely voting down his pet programs” (Pittman, 1981).

Jackson columnist Bill Minor also wrote criticizing Winter’s lack of toughness with an “institution noted for being very independent of Governors.” Minor also predicted tough times ahead for Winter’s education issues (B. Minor, personal communication, October 19, 2004).

Secretary of State Ed Pittman who would not acknowledge or address the Blue Ribbon Committee blamed Winter for a “lack of leadership” causing the failure of the reform measures. He never mentioned the governor by name, but in a speech March 9, 1981, he said that the people had been denied changes that had been promised because there was no leadership to get the promises passed. Pittman said the state needs somebody who “will stand up and say what he thinks regardless of what legislative leaders may think” (Pittman Poor Leadership, 1981).

Winter did not speak of Pittman’s remarks because he felt that he was positioning himself for a run for governor himself. He also addressed the columnists’ criticisms by stating the governor had limited powers because of the no succession rule. Winter also said that his ability to enact new programs would be dependent on his ability “to persuade and to work out a program with their cooperation.” Winter felt that confronting legislative leadership would bring swift and automatic doom to his educational reform agenda (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005). Winter felt his knowledge of the legislative process and his personality would allow him to deal from a

conciliatory way with the Legislature to gain the reform package he sought. The defeats by the 1981 Legislature and the criticism leveled at him from the Legislature and press made Winter question his chosen style and conjured up thoughts that his critics might be right (W. Winter, personal communication, February, 12, 2005).

Following the crushing defeats of bills in 1981 session, Winter said that he would take a positive stance in order to not lose too much ground. Winter said he was always “careful to not tear down a fence until he found out why it was built” (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005). He commended the supporters of the legislation and said that even in defeat he was just beginning to fight for the programs of the “Blue Ribbon” Committee. Laying the groundwork for a strategy for 1982 that would prove successful, Winter spoke to the Mississippi Professional Educators on March 9, 1981. He blamed the failure of the reform efforts on public support, which he said was necessary for approval. He called on all professional educators to join him “outside the formal structure of the classroom” to help educate the public on the need for reform (Winter To Gather Support For Failed School Measures, 1981).

Governor Winter promised to fight for kindergartens through “every city and county in this state” and to provide some, if not all with a public kindergarten. He called for increased efforts to convince doubters of the need for a compulsory attendance law. Winter said that dropouts would become the “functionally illiterate in our society. Parchman, the state penitentiary, is full of people who don’t have an education.” Winter strongly encouraged these supporters to renew their spirits because he stated, “more than

ever before there is the absolute necessity of those holding public office being in closer touch with educators” (Winter To Gather Support For Failed School Measures, 1981).

Blue Ribbon Committee chair Jack Reed was not as positive as Governor Winter was. Reed said, “They didn’t have to waste time writing their own bills so they were able to kill all our proposals in record time.” He was not amused at any of the proceedings. In fact, he was discouraged. Reed anticipated that at least some of the Committee’s proposals would pass, but when every single one failed, he became more discouraged and pessimistic. Reed felt that the Legislature had its “head in the sand.” He said:

The only way we can get people to support public education is to inform them. To what extent, the work has not been wasted, but we certainly had a miserable experience with the Legislature. Until people of this state are willing to support integrated public education positively, we will not get these bills through. We presented the Legislature a good program and they are the ones that dropped the ball. (Reed Disappointed: School Upgrading Package Dies, 1981)

Several state newspapers lashed out at the Legislature for its apathy shown toward the education community. An editorial in the *Tupelo Daily Journal* said there was little effort to make Mississippi’s weak public school system “less bad” (Little effort to improve schools, 1981). The Capitol correspondent for the *Sun Herald*, Lloyd Gray wrote in the *Mississippi Business Journal* a column expressing dismay that the leaders of the reform movement had lost the battle to the “defenders of the status quo like House Speaker C.B. Newman.” Gray said that there had been a ray of hope, but the Legislature “treated its own no differently that it treated earlier education advocates.” He blamed the members of the Committee who had shown “limited enthusiasm” instead of Governor Winter for the failed reform efforts. Gray wrote that without a “massive public uprising” on behalf of kindergarten, the Legislature would continue to “pretend that a need doesn’t

exist.” Gray felt Winter’s legislative package had been “bold” but reasonable and moderate.

Gray closed his column by asking:

What did lawmakers do with that list? They took it, scratched out the really controversial things, and handed it back to the governor with smug assurances that he could have all that was left. The bold stuff will have to wait (Gray, 1981).

The other significant event of early 1981 was the release of President Reagan’s budget plans. On March 7, the *Commercial Appeal* reported that Mississippi would lose more than \$300 million in federal funds over the next four years if Reagan’s budget cuts were left intact (Reagan’s Budget Cuts, 1981). These proposed cuts created panic in some state agencies. Winter realized that federal cuts in addition to reduced state revenues caused by a national recession could lead to reductions in agency budgets and doom any chances of reform. A tax increase was probably in the near future to save and maintain, while not creating new programs and services. The future looked bleak (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005).

Shortly after the end of the 1981 legislative session, it became apparent that Winter must in some way find a method of coupling education with economic development. Earlier in his tenure, a large Chicago based electronics company nixed Mississippi in favor of building a plant in South Carolina. Winter flew to Chicago to meet with the company decision makers who told him very frankly that South Carolina had a better system of public education than Mississippi. They were going to locate solely based on quality of schools. This gave Winter new impetus to pursue educational reform in the state. Winter saw a direct correlation between

business and economic development and the quality of the educational system (W. Winter, personal conversation, February 12, 2005).

In late April 1981, Governor Winter invited all valedictorians of every high school in the state to join the attendees of the Governor's Scholars Recognition Program to meet leaders of business, education, and government agency heads in addressing the question, "Is Mississippi Meeting the Need for Scientists, Engineers, and Technicians in an Advancing Society?" Winter said in his letter of invitation, "I hope that the colloquium will establish a milestone in our pursuit of academic excellence in Mississippi" (State valedictorians, 1981).

The *Mississippi Academy of Sciences News* reported that the colloquium was an effort "to assess, encourage, and stimulate educational activities and opportunities, with their subsequent benefits for the State and its citizens" (Mississippi Academy of Sciences News, 1981). The *Peoples Press* of Yazoo City reported that this colloquium "is part of Winter's continuing effort to promote and develop education in Mississippi" (Winter's continuing support for education, 1981).

The keynote speaker of the colloquium was Dr. Arno Penzias of Bell Laboratories who had won the Nobel Peace Prize for physics in 1978. While attendance was over a thousand, the journalistic coverage was severely lacking. The *Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal* challenged the state's media for not giving it adequate coverage. Joe Rutherford, a member of the *Daily Journal* editorial staff reported that Winter and Penzias "forcefully, accurately, and disturbingly graphed the grave education and knowledge deficit" that Mississippi had. Winter challenged citizens of the state to "raise your sights

in terms of what we consider to be an acceptable standard for our educational system.” He went on to say that Mississippians were living in a complicated and demanding world whether “we like it or not” and that education was the key to solving many of this complex society’s problems (Rutherford, 1981).

Governor Winter started in 1981 the Governor’s School, a summer program for gifted high school students. This program generated a great deal of support for the value of education and the building of educational coalitions through consensus. Governor and Mrs. Winter began visiting public schools on a regular basis in 1981. He continued this practice throughout his tenure as governor. He taught several classes throughout the state as a way of learning first hand of the needs of the educational community. It was also good public relations and allowed him to see education from the inside out. Governor Winter would talk to students, teachers, and administrators to identify what they considered proper approaches to educational reform. Winter felt these visits were vital and an integral part of the educational process (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005).

Reform Foes and Allies

The key question was at this point, who was in favor of reform and who was against it, and how would William F. Winter change the minds of those not willing to change? A key to the later success of Winter’s reform efforts began on May 13, 1981. He addressed the Mississippi Economic Council and used phrases, statistics, and anecdotes that would form the basis for his speeches over the next crucial months. The speeches would include these facts and figures: in Mississippi the armed forces rejection rate was

35 percent to 9 percent nationally; out of every one hundred students who graduated from high school, fifty-nine dropped out somewhere in the process compared to 49 nationally; nationally three out of four five-year olds were enrolled in kindergartens but in Mississippi only 5.4 percent had preschool training; fifteen thousand students dropped out of school last year; six thousand first graders failed to begin school last year; and in 1971 Mississippi had a per capita income of \$345 below Arkansas and in 1981 the difference was \$672 (Mullins, 1992).

Winter's point illustrated that Mississippi was producing generations of underproductive citizens. The reason for the economic failings of the state rested squarely on the shoulders of education. If the state were going to develop economically, an unequivocal commitment to its public schools would have to be made and made quickly. Winter said many reasons existed as to why the Legislature had refused to make these commitments, but he added:

I wouldn't swap living in Mississippi for living anywhere else in the country, particularly in those crowded urban areas where they have a lot of money, but where they do not have a quality of life equal to ours. We can have it both ways with the right planning and with the right incentive and the right motivation and intelligent, courageous leadership.

Winter added in his speech the need for kindergartens and a strong compulsory attendance law. Winter said that he was more convinced of the necessity of having public kindergartens than he was of any decision he had made regarding education. Winter felt that kindergarten would have a greater impact on a poor child's learning pattern than anything else the state could provide. He closed his speech by asking legislators, "What is more expensive, ignorance or education?" He addressed the business community and told

them it was their responsibility to support education reform because it was best for economic development (State valedictorians, 1981). The address was widely covered by the state media. Supportive editorials appeared in such papers as: (Ignorance or Education, 1981) *Mississippi Press* in Pascagoula; (Ignorance or Education, 1981) *Copiah County Courier* in Hazlehurst; (Ignorance or Education, 1981) *Press Register* in Clarksdale; (Ignorance or Education, 1981) *Enterprise Journal* in McComb; (Ignorance or Education, 1981) *Tupelo Daily Journal*; and (Ignorance or Education, 1981) *Clarion-Ledger* in Jackson.

It was during the mid 1981 time that several newspapers began to emerge as supporters of Winter's plans and ideas. A most ardent and one of the first supporters was George McLean, publisher of the *Northeast Mississippi Journal* better known as the "Tupelo Journal." McLean had been a leader in educational progress in Tupelo for a long period. He also was supportive in encouraging Winter to take a strong position on education early in Winter's political journey. McLean was consulted by Winter often as to what to do next to enact his programs (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005).

The two newspapers that most strongly supported the efforts of Winter were the *Sun Herald* in Biloxi and the *Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News* (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005).

The August 27, 1981 editorial in the *Sun Herald* said:

When the Mississippi Legislature gets down to day-to-day business of government, it is apparent that taking care of the children of this state receives a very low priority...How often has the Legislature turned its back on the needs of Mississippi's children? Let us count the ways: First, the lawmakers said no to

public kindergartens, then it was no to compulsory education, then it was no to help for emotionally disturbed children...and the list goes on and on (Dickerson, 1981).

In the summer of 1981, the Governor's staff became very active in the education arena. John Henegan, Chief of Staff, organized the staff and made assignments as to areas of responsibility. Dick Molpus gave over 350 speeches on behalf of education reform from 1980 to 1983. Molpus, at one speech had dinner rolls thrown at him and was asked by an audience member what day duck season opened, yet he stayed the course. While the attitude in 1980 was one of being on an impossible mission, one year later saw a monumental shift in attitudes and beliefs. Years later, after the passage of the Educational Reform Act, some felt the staff of Governor Winter received too much credit. Whether they did or did not do a majority of the work is debatable, but the end result shows that without the effort and work of Winter's staff the Educational Reform Act would surely have died (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005).

A letter sent by Governor Winter to education, business, and civic groups in July of 1981 that said, "I have therefore made education a primary emphasis of mine for the 1982 Legislative session." The publication in 1981 of *The Need for Quality* by the Southern Regional Education Board provided Winter with the "most incisive" analysis of the needs in elementary and secondary education that he had seen. Excerpts from it became part of many speeches delivered by Winter. A copy of it was kept on his desk in the Mansion and was often carried to meetings with him (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005).

The report was a list of twenty-five recommendations to improve education. The 17 member task force that authored the report recommended such improvements as: tightening the admissions standards for teacher candidates; improving teacher education programs; including provisional certification for all beginning teachers; developing incentives to attract science and math teachers; developing alternate certification methods for teachers in shortage areas; revising recertification methods; increasing staff development funding; establishing a joint committee of higher education and elementary and secondary educators to raise curriculum standards in the high schools; eliminating mandated courses outside the major subjects; raising admissions standards to colleges and universities, revamping vocational education, and establishing lines of communication between the various educational sectors (Southern Regional Education Board, 1981).

1981 came to a close with both a sense of optimism and pessimism because of renewed interest in the reform movement, but at the same time fear that federal budget cuts would erode any chance of funding much needed reform. An editorial in the December 30, 1981 McComb *Enterprise Journal* stated that the economic situation was indeed bleaker as the 1982 session was starting. The paper quoted Representative Tommy Walman as saying “I thought last year things would be tight, but this year it looks like it is going to be worse.” The editorial nevertheless endorsed spending more on education including kindergarten and compulsory attendance. Another column by Paul Pittman published on December 31, 1981 set the stage for the next year. He said that Winter was at a critical point in his four-year tenure and his prestige was on the line for gaining

approval of the educational improvements. He stated that Winter was totally committed to education but faced a less than enthusiastic legislature, which had “sanctimoniously” declared its opposition to increasing taxes for new programs. Pittman questioned Governor Winter’s ability to “play political hardball.” He felt Winter’s toughest test was beginning with the 1982 session. Pittman said:

Winter is determined, but the fate of his proposals obviously rests with the power brokers of the two houses...The bush hogs in the legislature have been silent or, at best, faintly skeptical. The game is still in Winter’s court (Pittman, 1981).

Therefore, began 1982.

The first kindergarten was brought to the United States from Germany in 1855 for German-speaking children in Watertown, Wisconsin. The first kindergarten to be opened as part of the public school system was in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1873. Sixty-eight years later in 1941, the first bill calling for state funded public kindergartens was introduced in the Mississippi Legislature (Gray, 1981).

Prior to the decades of the seventies, there was little kindergarten activity in the public schools. There were several private programs that were organized and operated by church groups, but only three public school districts had programs. Tupelo and Natchez charged tuition to pay for the kindergarten while Meridian financed its kindergarten with federal funds (Plants, Emerson, & Fortenberry, 1970).

Governor John Bell Williams’ Committee on Children and Youth in its Mississippi Report to the 1970 White House Conference on Children and Youth recommended kindergartens for the public schools. The Report stated:

The implementation of public school kindergartens can become a reality when legislative provision is made for necessary funds...Quality early childhood

education should be made available to all children in Mississippi by age five. Legislative provision should be made for the expenditure of Minimum Foundation program funds for the public education of five-year olds (Lotterhos, 1970).

A study conducted in 1972 by the State Department of Education assessing the general education needs in Mississippi found that only 5.85% of the five year olds in the state were enrolled in some form of kindergarten in 1972. An estimate was made that a kindergarten program implemented statewide would reduce the first grade retention rate in the state by 10%. The study also found that kindergarten was a high priority need with many educators (Mississippi State Department of Education, 1972).

In 1974 Governor Bill Waller, the State Superintendent of Education, Garvin Johnson, and several statewide organizations again pushed for kindergarten legislation. It appeared very promising when several teachers and education activists testified before House and Senate Committees. Jackson teacher Linda Anglin was very optimistic about the legislation because it allowed each local district to choose to reduce pupil teacher ratios in grades one through three or establish a kindergarten program (Bradley, 1974).

Opposition to kindergarten programs again began to cry lack of funding. They would either take a position that we could grant a teacher pay raise or establish a kindergarten program. Representative Betty Long, who opposed kindergarten programs under Governor Winter in 1982, offered the amendment to substitute a salary increase for the kindergarten programs. Her amendment passed by 71-45 vote, which again doomed the kindergarten effort (Saggus, 1974).

During the remainder of the 1970's kindergarten bills were introduced in each session. Over forty bills pertaining to kindergartens were introduced during the decade. In

1978 and 1979, optimism was high, but they suffered the same fate as 1974. The same tireless proponents of early childhood education fought each year to no avail. The stage was set for one more effort to take place in 1982 (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005).

As the 1982 session started, the kindergarten issue was larger than ever before. It was the number one priority of the governor. How would Governor William F. Winter lead a reform effort that had been defeated and ignored during his first two years as governor to conclude with passage of the educational of the Educational Reform Act of 1982? Support for public kindergarten had grown substantially outside the traditional groups of women's club and educators. The business community led by the Mississippi Economic Council was becoming interested in endorsing the concept. The Leadership Mississippi Alumni Association considered kindergartens as its top priority (W. Davis, personal communication, 1981). By the start of the legislative session, several newspaper editorials from various areas of Mississippi supported Winter's kindergarten proposal. They included *The Amory Advertiser* (Editorial December 14, 1981); the *Mississippi Press* in Pascagoula (Editorial, September 17, 1981); the *Tate County Democrat* (Editorial, September 17 1981); the *Newton Record* (Editorial, December 30 1981); and the *Daily Corinthian in Corinth* (Editorial, December 12 1981).

The strongest editorial support came from the Jackson *Clarion-Ledger*, which said Governor Winter was putting more emphasis on kindergarten in 1982 than he had in 1981. The editorial said:

Public education in Mississippi is growing stronger with each passing year, but until time as the state has a public kindergarten program that growth will always

fall short of what it should be...By approving public kindergartens, the Legislature not only would ensure the state's continued economic growth, it would help reduce the prison population, the welfare rolls, and the unemployment lines (Kindergarten support, 1981).

As the 1982 session of the Mississippi Legislature opened, the kindergarten issue had grown to represent so much more than just an early childhood program. Emotions on this issue ran the full gamut, from the obvious profound pride of a five-year old black boy in a Title 1 kindergarten program in Rolling Fork, Mississippi, as he haltingly read a few lines for Mrs. Winter to the words of Senator Ellis Bodron as he still ten years later referenced the "god dammed kindergarten program." However nobody, proponent or opponent, had in January 1982 any inclination of the increasing role kindergarten would play in the whole education reform process over the next twelve months (Mullin, 1992).

Governor Winter's legislative allies, at the insistence of members of the Blue Ribbon Committee, had a bill written and prepared to be introduced, which addressed the four cornerstones of his educational reform plan. Three compulsory attendance bills were introduced in the House. A bill to finance educational and economic development was introduced with a rider that supported statewide public kindergarten (Mississippi House Journal, 1981).

In the Senate, bills were introduced to seek compulsory attendance and kindergarten as well a bill to establish an economic and educational trust fund to provide dollars for the educational proposals that were forthcoming. Senator Gordon introduced a bill that would create a separate state board for vocational and technical education. The bill was introduced "by request," which means that he did not necessarily support the bill but did so as a "favor" or for payback Senator Bill Alexander introduced "by request"

legislation creating a lay board of education and an appointed state superintendent. A controversial bill in the Senate was introduced by Senator Vince Scoper of Laurel, which would place the state's oil and gas severance taxes into a special fund for education purposes when the aggregate reached a certain amount. According to Winter, his experience in the legislative process allowed him to call in favors by asking that certain friends or political allies introduce legislation to get the process started. Winter knew that for anything to be passed it had to be introduced and processed through committee to reach final approval (W. Winter, personal communication February 12, 2005).

Knowing money would be needed to enact reform, the first issue that could have been divisive dealt with Governor Winter's proposals involving the oil and gas severance tax increase. Winter stated in his "State of the State" address to the Legislature on January 14, 1982 that he would need the support of the oil and gas industry in funding changes and improvements in education. He assured the legislators that an increase in funding would not hurt exploration. He said:

The experience of other states is that it has not happened there. Since 1970, 12 states have increased their severance tax with four doing so since 1980. It did not alter production patterns in any of those states...I have had a great many knowledgeable, successful and candid oil and gas professionals assure me that it will not happen in Mississippi. The people of Mississippi did not elect me to be a do nothing Governor who was content to follow the line of least resistance. They did not elect any of us to come here to Jackson and pass many resolutions about motherhood and apple pie. The people of Mississippi are tired to being in last place...We are here to put the most creative thoughts we have into the solution to problems that are not going to go away and that cry out for the legislature to address. If I thought for one minute that it would happen, I would not be standing here now asking you to provide this additional revenue. (Mullins, 1992)

Winter's address received support especially on this issue. The challenge, according to Winter, was to take a risk that a severance package might pass and to see if

the legislature might want to mirror what had gone on in other states involving the oil and gas industry. He was very clear that if other states could seek the tax, Mississippi should also and could afford to make it happen. A *Clarion Ledger* editorial said if words alone worked in politics, then Winter were economic plan and proposals would become reality (Editorial, 1982).

While the plan to create an oil and gas severance tax was accepted by many, the industry itself balked at the idea. In addition, concern for the tax was raised by those most directly affected by the increase, namely automobile dealers and college of business professors (W. Winter, personal communication, 1982).

Winter picked one of his aides, Ray Mabus, to present the administration's side of the argument. He relied on previous research done by staff member under Dick Molpus on Federal-State Programs. The report from Molpus showed Mississippi eighth out of twenty-one oil producing states in the cost of drilling and equipping an average well. It also showed that Mississippi had a dry hole rate of 62 percent compared to the national average of 29 percent (Department of Planning and Policy, 1982). Mabus used this report and other sources to become very knowledgeable on this subject. His assignment was a difficult one not only because of the complexity of the issue, but also because of the influence and power of some of the business and legislative opponents. Some of the same opponents were of the mindset that taxing oil and gas to raise the level of education of blacks was counter-productive and not of the mission of those in the true South. Because of his performance as the point man on this highly controversial issue, Mabus developed a group of supporters who admired his quick grasp of a highly complicated technical

issue and his tenacity in holding his ground against some old guard political and business powers (and attitudes). There was a corresponding increase in the number of intense opponents of Mabus in the legislature because of his style, which was considered brash, arrogant, argumentative, and even cocky. After his work on this issue during the 1982 session, Mabus became the most controversial member of the “Boys of Spring” (Mullin, 1992). When the reform movement was successful later that year Mabus gave credit to Winter for sticking with it and the fact he had a group of followers who simply did not know any better (R. Mabus, personal communication, 2004).

When the hearings opened, the oil industry lined up one ally after another to defend their no tax increase stance. The general direction of the oil industries testimony was that they were being picked on by a “demagogue of a governor looking for an easy mark.” Their attitude was one of uncompromising, unwavering, and very combative. One Mississippi oilman spoke about his twin brother in Texas getting richer than he because of a better tax rate in Texas (Gray, 1982).

Winter’s point of view was presented by Ray Mabus who had lined up an equal number of presenters. One of the most influential and powerful was Jackson accountant Peter Koury, who had several oil and gas clients. Koury stated that the increase in tax would not stop oil production in 1982 just as it had not when a 6 percent rate increase was passed back in 1944 (P. Koury, personal communication, 1982)

When the bill reached the floor of the house, and after many attempts were made to amend the bill to include a tax to pay for educational reform, the bill failed by a vote of 60-59 with 72 votes being required to pass. The bill was revived two days later only to be

defeated again 65-55 (House Journal, 1982). The action ended any real hope for an increase in taxes for new education proposals. Several of the state's newspapers lambasted both the legislature and the oil industry. The *Northeast Mississippi Journal*, in a May 31, 1982 editorial, *said* the oil and gas industry had "conquered the legislators with confusion," and the legislature had bowed to "selfish special interests that don't want to invest in the state's future." The *Deer Creek Pilot* in Rolling Fork stated that the legislature had failed to ensure a future for good education. The editor said that this state's ship was "finally coming in under the firm hand of Governor William Winter as pilot. But it ran aground on the shoals of a powerful oil lobby and a muddy bottom of carefully calculated misinformation (confusion)" (Decell, 1982).

Winter knew he was in for a battle and that the chances of beating the oil industry were slight. He did not fully understand how intense the battle would be. He said:

I ran into the most immovable object I think I ever ran into in my long years in state government. That was the implacable, unyielding, uncompromising opposition on the part of the oil and gas industry to even the most modest increase in oil and gas severance taxes...After the 1982 session I realized that this was probably not going to be the basis for funding an education program (W. Winter personal conversation, February 12, 2005).

The compulsory attendance discussion had been decided quickly, as would the kindergarten legislation, but the drama surrounding the kindergarten issue would have deep and far-reaching implications. Jim Young of the *Commercial Appeal* reported that the kindergarten discussions "will serve as an indication of whether the office of governor really means anything in the legislatively-run state." He also felt this would be an indicator as to how far Mississippi had progressed racially. Young said,

Blatant racist rhetoric is taboo in Mississippi politics now. However, the old ways die slowly and there is still a strong undercurrent of thinking in the white community, which holds that black folks are not entitled to all the same benefits from society. Their voices will not be heard in the public legislative debates over kindergartens and severance taxes. However, if the Winter package is blocked, some of the broadest smiles will be on racist faces (Young, 1982).

The battle for passage of a kindergarten package would occur first in the House. It seemed that the Senate did not want to act on addressing the bill until the House did. The bill passed the Education Committee and the Appropriations Committee on February 3, 1982 and was placed on the House calendar (House Journal, 1982).

February 11, 1982 was the deadline for passage of the bill and it did not look promising since it was so low on the House calendar. The House Rules Committee voted 7-6 on the morning of February 10 not to move the bill ahead of other bills. The action meant if the bill was not voted on the 10th, a two-thirds vote would be needed to consider it on the 11th. When Representative Clark and Representative Walman told Speaker of the House Newman that they would seek recognition from the floor to move the kindergarten bill to the top of the calendar, the Speaker asked that they not do that because a majority of the members of the House did not want to vote on the issue. Clark said the exact words of the Speaker were that a vote on kindergarten “will put too much heat on these boys.” Clark was told by Newman that he would not recognize him and he told Walman he would not recognize him either. As the session was coming close to the adjournment time, Clark asked to make a motion, and Speaker Newman told him to state it. Clark moved that the kindergarten bill (House bill 296) be moved to the top of the calendar for consideration. Speaker Newman then informed Clark that he was not recognized.

Walman had the same experience. Many members of the House started booing and some started applauding. It took several minutes to gain control (Mullins, 1992).

A motion was made to adjourn after which Speaker Newman asked for a voice vote. Only 11 members of the House needed to stand and ask for a voice vote and one had to be granted. Dick Molpus counted at least 25 legislators who stood. The cry of no was clearly much louder than the ayes, but Newman declared the ayes have it and announced the House to be adjourned. He immediately left the speaker's podium. The House erupted in anger. Newman would say later,

I was severely criticized by some people, especially the news media. Now you understand that I was raised in the Legislature. I was raised to respect the Speaker's office, the Speaker's chair and the Speaker is supposed to, in my opinion, protect the members. In addition, there were many of the members of the House that did not want to be recorded as voting no or yes. (Mullins, 1992)

Governor Winter immediately issued an angry statement to the media. The release said:

Obviously, a majority of the people elected representatives support kindergarten. It is unfortunate that a parliamentary maneuver has denied the people an opportunity to have kindergarten decided on its merits. This procedure does not serve the people of Mississippi. This vote may delay, but it certainly does not end my pursuit of a statewide system of kindergartens. By no means is this the end of the kindergarten effort. (Statement from Governor's Office, 1982)

Speaker of the House Buddie Newman received tremendous amounts of criticism not only from his colleagues but also in the newspapers of the state. An editorial in *The Sun-The Daily Herald* in Biloxi on February 12, 1982 was especially strong. In addition to saying that the Legislature should get rid of Newman, the editorial said:

Nearly a half million Mississippians voted to elect Governor William Winter who views the kindergarten bill as a cornerstone of his attempts to upgrade education in this

state. Just a few thousand voters in rural Mississippi elected Newman to the House. The democratic process has been raped.

Newman was from the Delta region of Mississippi and had many friends from that area that followed the teachings and examples of Walter Sillers. Sillers was an open advocate of ignoring the wishes of African Americans and would often seek to defeat legislation to improve the education levels of Delta African Americans. Because he was a disciple of Sillers, he ruled the House of Representatives with an iron hand of control (D. Maupus, personal communication, 2004).

The regular session of the Mississippi Legislature ended and again Governor Winter's proposals had failed. The failure was more sudden and dramatic than had occurred in 1981 because of the long drawn out debates over each issue and the sudden adjournment of the House. Governor Winter, in 1981 was seen as not forceful enough and in some cases very weak. After the efforts at reform during the 1982 session, those words were never heard again. A column in *The Clarion Ledger* stated that regardless of the outcome of the 1982 session, Winter was not going to leave himself open to similar criticism because he was taking a "do-or-die" stand on education during this session (Williams, 1982).

Many thought that with the end of the session in 1982 so would the end of Governor Winter's educational reform efforts and for the remaining months, Winter would be a ceremonial only governor. One columnist, Lloyd Gray, felt that like the previous two governors who had not accomplished all they had sought; Winter might turn

to further political ambitions. He did say that because of Winter's strong belief in the reform movement he would not abandon his responsibility (Gray, 1982).

Winter had some depressed feelings as the session ended. He was not sure that he could muster the support for another fight during the 1983 session, which would be his last chance. On April 6, 1982, Winter spoke for the first time and used the term "special session." He said he had received many letters seeking his endorsement of such a session.

Winter said that there was a chance that a special session would occur, but said he had no plans to call one. He did say that specific measures would have a chance at passage since he sets the agenda for the special session. He also said that he would consider a teacher pay raise should he call a special session. Winter stated that if he did call a special session, it would not be until after the general elections in November (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005).

Instead of retreating in defeat, Winter's young staff became even more focused to see educational reform occur. Mrs. Winter, who had been a strong contributor in the failed 1982 fight, became even more of a fighter.

In a speech to a group of library patrons, he said:

Sometimes I feel like I'm not on the same wave length...It's beyond my very comprehension how anybody would not want to help a child learn better...I'm disappointed the Legislature did not see fit to make some drastic changes in education (Winter's Wife Disappointed by Inaction on Education, 1982).

Plans were beginning to take root that would lead to a special session and ultimate reform.

Winter's Final Reform Effort

Winter and his staff organized a speakers bureau that would be available to speak anywhere in the state of Mississippi on any subject requested. The speeches would be structured to address for the first one-third of the speech the topic of the day germane to the gathering, and the final two-thirds would be addressing educational reform issues. Mrs. Winter, next to the Governor himself, had been the most prolific speaker during the first half of 1982 and had made almost as many speeches on education as the Governor himself. She would address all male civic clubs who were not accustomed to hearing a female. The speeches by Winter were much like the ones earlier in the year, but now contained a sense of urgency. He would address reform and then he would remind the audience that a governor, alone, could not change public opinion without the support of the public. He said, "Legislators mirror public opinion. That is representative democracy" (Hilliard, 1982).

The multitude of speeches by Winter and his staff garnered large amounts of support and coverage from the press during the summer months. Not many days from July through August went by without a speech being given somewhere. The word was being spread (Reese, 1982).

A very effective tact during the summer efforts was that compilation of Winter's special friends in each county. After campaigning five times, Winter had a network of friends and supports across the state. The list developed simply was very valuable in later identifying community leaders who would support Winter's efforts (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005).

Another significant event of the summer of 1982 occurred when his fellow governors chose Winter in June as Chairman of the Southern Regional Education Board. This position allowed him to provide the leadership in creating a state-by-state report card on efforts to implement educational needs and reform (Sullivan, 1982).

A final significant event occurred on a late August day in 1982 when the weekly ABC news magazine “20/20” announced plans to broadcast as its’ lead story on the August 26 edition the episode of the kindergarten bill and the Mississippi House of Representatives. The resulting story was devastating to House Speaker Buddie Newman, and it generated tremendous amounts of media coverage throughout the state of Mississippi.

ABC had heard of the story from Charles Bannerman, a black business leader in Greenville who had informed “20/20.” Newman accused columnist Bill Minor of contacting the network probably because Minor had openly criticized Newman and because he had been interviewed by the show’s producer. Minor denied the charges and called the story “an absolute lie” (Hinton, 1982).

The *Greenwood Commonwealth* said the program cast the State of Mississippi in an unfavorable light with viewers asking, “What’s wrong with those folks down in Mississippi? Don’t they see the need for good education” (“Kindergarten Issues”, 1982)?

In August of 1982 the Governor’s Office released a statement that in the next few weeks a series of eight, which grew to nine, forums would be held all over the state in key locations to garner support for educational reform and to inform the constituents of the agendas of the meetings (Forum Announced, 1982).

It is difficult to decide where the idea for the forums originated, but it was thought that the idea came from a belief that public opinion was the only real factor to sway the opinion of the legislature. Additionally it was planned to get the business and community leaders involved in hosting the town gatherings. Winter said:

I have shot every weapon that I had in my limited arsenal, and it was going to take an organized plan and systematic campaign of mobilizing public opinion. That public opinion could probably best be dramatized by bringing people together (Mullins, 1992).

The forums would begin with master of ceremony, Ray Mabus, introducing local school superintendents and government leaders who would give a welcome. Jim Meredith who was Winter's Director of the Research and Development would give a five to ten minute presentation on the state of the economy in Mississippi. He always made sure that he tightly bound education and economic growth together. After Meredith, Governor Winter would give a keynote address. At the beginning of each address, he would introduce individually each legislator present and he would praise and thank them for their efforts on behalf of education. He wanted to point out the legislators to show the constituents where their leaders were seated so they could speak to them at the end of the forum.

His speeches were in many ways extemporaneous to meet the needs of the audience. He used many of the same lines he had used a dozen times before but would tailor his remarks to fit the situation, size of the crowd, enthusiasm, and even frequency of applause. If time permitted, Winter would take question from the audience that had been written and turned in before the forum began. Some in attendance complained that they did not have a chance to debate one on one with Winter, but that was by design.

At the conclusion of the remarks, and after a few questions had been asked and answered, the crowd could select to attend one of four sessions addressing teacher salaries, the lay board, kindergarten, and accountability and accreditation. While the public attended the special sessions, Winter would gather the legislators in a room to seek their support for the reform effort (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005)

After the first forum in Oxford, Mrs. Winter was particularly upset at the lack of news coverage. She called the *Clarion Ledger* to voice her concern and seek support. The last eight forums had vast coverage from many of the state's newspapers, which led to Winter saying that this may have been the single most important phone call in the reform movement (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005).

Ten days after the special session was announced, many of the predictions of an early and swift (same day) adjournment were dismissed. A most dramatic change was that of House Speaker Newman who was showing an attitude of willingness to listen. Newman publicly announced his belief that Winter's education program was entitled to a fair hearing in the special session. He called on Winter to meet with the heads of the education and finance committees in both houses to "chart a course." Newman said it was his opinion that the Legislature should listen to the Governor's recommendations and enact bills on the issues when there was agreement. Only months earlier Newman clearly violated the rules and the ethics of the House by failing to follow proper procedure in the House. Now he says that he would not be part to any early adjournment without giving Winter "ample opportunity" to explain his programs, which should then be given "ample

consideration.” Newman stated that he had made his feelings clear to several of the House members (“Newman: Education proposals, 1982).

Winter began to meet personally with key legislators within three days of Newman’s request. The highly anticipated meetings with Meredith and Bodron occurred on December 2, 1982. However, before this meeting both of these chairs had continued to denounce the calling of the special session since the day it was announced. Meredith sent a letter to the other committee members urging them to adjourn the opening day if there was no agreement reached between the two houses on the Governor’s program prior to the special session. This meeting should occur instead of a special session, and Meredith suggested that the legislators agree to devote the first two weeks of the regular session to Winter’s proposals (Treyens, 1982).

Winter said that at the meeting Meredith was “very negative” and accused him of bringing the legislators to Jackson in a futile attempt to make something happen. He accused Winter and his staff of not being prepared for a special session. Winter understood the importance of meeting with these two key legislators. He knew that without Meredith’s and Bodron’s support or at least their acquiescence the essential funding apparatus might die in committees. He also was sensitive to the pressure on them with both the special session having been set and the demand that they respond in a cooperative manner. Winter did not feel that either of them could come to the session and “stonewall.” He realized the importance of “leaving a back door open” (W. Winter, personal communication, July 22, 1992).

The meeting was beneficial. Both Bodren and Meredith softened their criticisms. Meredith retreated from his position of favoring a quick adjournment, but he remained critical of Winter for not publicly recommending a specific tax hike other than oil and gas severance. Meredith also announced his plan to canvass the Ways and Means Committee to get ideas about new taxes to fund the program. Bodren softened his stance also by reporting those who thought Winter wanted to fund the education programs with only a severance tax increase were mistaken. He said that he understood that was not Governor Winter's position. Bodron also stated that his position was not as the press had portrayed it...against funding an education program. He said his true position was that he was only opposed to funding it in a special session when the State's fiscal situation was unknown. Bodron predicted the Legislature would pass the no-cost items, but would wait until the next regular session to address the more costly proposals (Fields, 1982).

According to Winter, Speaker Newman, Senator Bodron, and Representative Meredith, all very powerful and influential members of the Mississippi legislature had, for whatever reason, softened their views on taxation and the value of educational reform. Newman's change of attitude came about because of a nationally televised network program where he was portrayed as corrupt politician. Bodron and Meredith had their attitudes softened, if not changed, by simply having a face-to-face sit down conversation with Winter (W. Winter, personal communication, October 19, 2005).

The special session was set to begin on December 6, 1982. The Sunday before the session was to begin the *Clarion Ledger* published a sermon written and delivered the Sunday before by Joe Tuten, pastor of the Jackson Calvary Baptist Church. It was one of

the most valuable, effective, and eloquent statements for the educational needs of the state during the movement. The title of the sermon was, “Is God interested in what happens to Mississippi education?” He tied education to economic development and he said:

Education involved more than economics...education has to do also with the mind and the soul. God’s people are perishing for lack of the kinds of knowledge which real life today harshly demands. Perishing in crime! Perishing at the hands of drug dealers! Perishing in the gunfire of youth who have dropped out of school! Perishing in overcrowded prisons! Perishing in lives of despair! Christians, under God, how can we be silent? Churches, under God, is this not our first mission field? Pastors, under God, how can we who have benefited so much from educational opportunities refrain from crying out in behalf of the children of our State?

Tuten called on presidents of universities, other professionals, and business leaders to stop not being involved and to help their fellow professional educators. He said, “Seldom have so many who benefited so much done so little in behalf of a right and good cause.” He closed his sermon referring to the racial issue:

The perception in this State is that our people are unwilling to support improved education because of the racial integration of the schools...I do not want anyone to doubt where I stand. If this perception is a fact, it is an attitude out of keeping with the teachings of God involved in the Bible and the God we worship in our churches...Education, the development of life under God, must be provided for blacks as well as whites. The black people of Mississippi have struggled and suffered right along with all of us. It is right for us to help them and for them to help us and us both to help each other climb to a better life under God...Yes, I believe God is very interested in education. I think he cares about thinking processes of the Legislature when they meet next week...I think God wants everybody in Mississippi to have a better life. I think God wants it. I think we can. I think we should. In addition, I hope we shall (Tuten, 1982).

The opening of the special session also included an address by Governor Winter. The session was held in the newly renovated capitol. The setting provided an impressive backdrop to a most important special session. Winter’s opening address included many of

the same points that had been made many times over the past two years. He closed his address with a challenge:

To do nothing or to enact halfway or piecemeal measures will be perceived as a message that Mississippi does not care about its future...For too long, we in Mississippi have reacted and not led, for too long, we have been content to let others get ahead of us. For too long, we have looked down at the dusty road of the present and not up at the bright horizons. For too long, we have worried about quick fixes and not long-range solutions. We can remedy these things now. You and I know that it will not be easy. Great deeds never are...I hope that we will seize the opportunity to do the most significant thing that you or I may ever have the privilege of doing, and that is to insure by our action at this session a better future for our children and therefore for the State of Mississippi (Mullins, 1992).

It was during a particular battle over legislation that Senator Jack Bondron would take a verbal jab against the Governor, the media, supporters of kindergarten, or the various teacher organizations. During one of his episodes, he was criticizing Winter's staff for stirring up emotions of the public when he suddenly referred to the young and aggressive members of Winter's staff as the "boys of spring" a title that would stick and be used several times in several references. The "boys of spring" enjoyed the label so much that they had ribbons made with the label on them ("Bondren accuses governor", 1982).

After many failed attempts at reform in the Legislature, and after hundreds of speeches, and after many meetings in many places during the summer of 1982, the headlines of the *Clarion Ledger* on the morning of December 21, 1982 read, "Historic education bill passes." Senator Brad Dye called the Reform Act the "most progressive bill that it's ever been my privilege to support since I've been in this Senate" (Treyens & Anklam, 1982).

On December 22, 1982, the Legislature adjourned, and Governor William F. Winter signed the 1982 Educational Reform Act into law. His goals were met and educational reform came to Mississippi, finally.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Beginning in Grenada, Mississippi, in 1923 when he was born, William Winter's entire life was impacted by education. Being taught by his mother in a one-room school house attached to his family barn to a point where he held the highest elected office in his home state, William F. Winter never forgot his roots, and never forgot how key education was to his achievements.

What made William Winter the person he was? Winter was influenced by education at an early age when taught by his mother. He was influenced by good teachers at Grenada High School. He was challenged by quality professors at the University of Mississippi. He learned to appreciate ethnic diversity during his days in Army. He never quit even after losing several elections, including two attempts at the governorship. He would never directly confront blatant racism in Mississippi; rather he worked within the system to change ideas and attitudes to help children, which helped all of Mississippi (W. Winter, personal communication, February 12, 2005).

Winter would define, as does Webster, that a servant is one who "answers the needs of" others (Mish, 1983). He saw a need even as a first grader in Grenada, then as an elementary student, and eventually as a student of the law at the University of Mississippi. His hope for the state that he grew up in and loved was to change education in order to change and improve the state itself.

What was William Winter really like, at least in the eyes of those who knew him well? Dr. Bryan Barker Jr. said, “I was thinking, I don’t remember when I didn’t know you.” Winter replied, “Well, my first recollection is a birthday party at your house when we were about four.” The two men were born 3 days apart and 3 miles apart and, as Winter related they were “destined to be inseparable until the governor went to Ole Miss and Barker to Mississippi State.” While Winter was governor, Barker was chair of the Animal Science Department at his alma mater. Today they share dinner after the traditional battle on the gridiron between Ole Miss and Mississippi State. Joking about the meeting, Winter said, “I’d never go if we didn’t win.” Barker said that he was never, “anti-Ole Miss. I never wanted to see them lose, unless they were playing State.” There is as little rivalry over school loyalty as there has been in every area of their lives. Barker said, “We were never competitive. I was probably the better hunter and rider and he was the better scholar.”(Bryan Barker, 1981).

Barker’s mother was the bus driver who drove the 2 to school in Grenada. That was 2nd grade. Winter had attended school before in the one-room school attached to the family barn. The six-grade schoolhouse had 9 pupils and I was, “scared to death of the big city of Grenada.” Barker said, “Life was filled with fun things. There was always plenty to keep you busy.” He related that he and Winter fished and hunted ducks in the ox-bow lakes of the Yalobusha River. They would even hunt rabbits with sticks just for fun and kill bullfrogs with slingshots made from inner tube rubber. “I came over to his house to eat the first duck that William shot.” When asked how he killed the duck, Winter said, “I snuck up on him.” When his father asked if he aimed at his head he said, “No, I

aimed at the duck.” Barker said that he and Winter would go to the movie on Saturday afternoon for a dime and see Tom Mix, Buck Jones, and Hopalong. “Fifteen cents would get you in the movie and Baby Ruth candy bar as big as the 50 cent ones now,” Barker said. They were never too far apart from each other; even when Winter’s house burned down, he stayed with Barker. “Our lives have just kind of touched,” Barker related.(Bryan Barker, 1981).

That common experience has a lot to do with friendship, according to Winter. “We grew up almost like members of the same family. Bryan and I were almost like brothers. There were not many other boys our age in the area. The shared experiences of those years represent ties you don’t lose,” (Bryan Barker, 1981).

Winter’s private secretary Janice Ammann after he was elected governor said, “I’ve been with him in the bad times and in the good times. I can tell you; this is the best time of all.” When asked what the governor was like, she said, “He’s a very humble man, a good man. He enjoys being governor. His daughter says he never raised his voice to her, but he has a look that really puts you in your place” (Cawthon, 1981).

Jackson attorney George Fair resides directly behind William and Elise Winter. Fair told of an occurrence that showed the human side of Winter. George said that one day he had lost his two daughters and wondered where they had gone. He walked out the back door of his home and looked down in the small valley and stream behind his house. He did not see the girls but heard them laughing. He walked down to the little stream and up the stream were Mary Love and Elizabeth playing in the stream, soaking wet. Standing right beside them with his pants leg rolled up past his knee with shoes and socks

off and his tie still on was Governor Winter playing in the stream with the girls. George said that William told him they were “fishing,” but George knew that they were just having fun with a favorite friend and neighbor. Fair said, “William Winter is the most real human being I have ever known, as well as being a terrific neighbor” (G. Fair, personal communication, November 18, 2005).

A typical day for Winter would begin at 7:30 in the morning and end before dinner in the evening when most often he would get into the Navy Grand Marquis and drive to the track by Chastain Junior High where he would run sometimes with his dog, Toby. On most days, no one seemed to notice the governor and his wife, which according to Mrs. Winter, “Is very nice. We have a house near here and have been coming here for years. Everyone minds their own business so it really can be a time for reflection.” Back in the governors mansion, he is the governor, but on the track at Chastain he is, “just another jogger standing in the warm evening sweating after a good workout” (Cawthon, 1981).

How could the Educational Reform Act of 1982 possibly have passed? How could opposition to the largest tax increase in Mississippi’s history be overcome? How could the racial undertones that had affected Mississippi so adversely for 20 years suddenly take a second seat to the needs of the state’s children? Essentially, how could opposition be thwarted?

Comments from key individuals from that era provide insight into how this “miracle”, as journalist Bill Minor termed it, came to pass. (For a full text of the interviews, refer to the appendix.)

Former Oklahoma Governor George Nigh, a personal friend of William Winter, felt that the most remarkable achievement was how Winter took the reform effort directly to the people, yet he never lost focus of the task at hand. Nigh said that often a governor must be attuned to the audience he is “playing to” instead of speaking to his own agenda. Nigh also said that a perhaps more remarkable feat was unifying a state that was divided by racial undertones.

Journalists played a key role in the reform act passage. The *Tupelo Journal* and eventually the *Clarion Ledger* in Jackson supported Winter’s efforts because he was so open, forthright, and honest in his interaction with the press. Bert Case, a reporter for WLBT was especially helpful in efforts to improve education. Many of the outlying newspapers were not helpful; yet the effects of the forums affected them positively as well. The journalists supported Winter’s efforts over a long haul, which the reform effort certainly was. Most admired him for “sticking with it.” The press carried Winter’s theme of “a boat rocking time” along for the duration of the effort. Winter’s wife Elise played a key role in journalistic involvement when she chastised the *Clarion Ledger* for not covering the first forum in Oxford.

In addition to gaining support of the public, Winter sought to gain support of the business community. Charles Deaton was Winter’s economic advisor who inter-faced with the business element in Mississippi to inform them of the fact that quality education would open more opportunities for economic development in the state.

A key factor in the passage of the reform efforts involved the work as Ray Mabus said of going to the people of Mississippi as citizens instead of as campaigners for public

office. The effectiveness of calling, writing, and of course meeting with the constituents was a point of strength in the reform movement.

Former Secretary of Education under President Bill Clinton and Governor of South Carolina, Dick Riley was amazed that in such hard economic times, under the leadership of Governor Winter much was accomplished. Riley, who Winter called one of his best friends, said that what Winter was able to do in Mississippi was a model for what his boss, President Clinton, tried to accomplish at a national level. President Clinton would often say, according to Riley, "I wonder what William Winter would do in this case." The impact of the William Winter reached to Washington, D.C.

The person who was both critic and supporter of Governor Winter and is today, according to Winter, one of his best friends was *Clarion Ledger* columnist, Bill Minor. Initially Minor thought that Winter would be just like every other governor. He saw him as another big talk, little action politician. The turning point for Minor, as with many, came in 1982 when Speaker Newman adjourned the legislature with a voice vote. Minor said many thought he had called ABC's 20/20 to investigate, but Minor maintained he did not. The impact of the 20/20 interview is legendary because it not only pointed out a huge mistake by the then Speaker of the House of Representatives Buddie Newman, but also made Newman aware that the public would be watching his every step. During the special session in 1982 Newman was much more patient and willing to listen to all sides and even admitted that the legislators must not "get in too big of a hurry" to make a decision. Minor said that he had been interviewed and when the final report aired was a genuine momentum builder for the reform efforts.

Winter's work ethic was addressed by John Henegan who stated that Winter was the first in office each day and the last to leave. He also said that the governor was meticulous in his organization and very methodical. The experience of being in nearly every phase of Mississippi government and the legislative process provided Winter with the needed expertise to navigate the legislative channels.

When the Educational Reform Act became law in December, 1982 Governor Winter said:

At no other time in the history of Mississippi has a Legislature come into a special session and in a two-week period of time enacted so sweeping a series of measures as has this Legislature. This bill is one of the most significant things any Legislature has done in this State. From this point, we are going to commit ourselves to be competitive with every other state. This education package represents a break with the old do-nothing spirit of the past. (Mullins, 1992)

National syndicated columnist Carl Rowan wrote:

The greatest piece of civil rights, national security and economic recovery legislation enacted this year does not bear any of those labels and did not come out Of Congress. It is the bill enacted by the Mississippi Legislature to spend \$106 Million to give children of that state a more reasonable chance at a decent education and to lift Mississippi out of the ignominy of being the worst educated most backward state in the union. (Fitzwater, 1983)

In a time of national economic recession and after two failed attempts at gaining passage of much needed reform, Winter turned to a grassroots effort to gain support for his reforms. The forums that were held throughout the state and the structure of those forums provided the citizens of the state with an opportunity to meet, greet, question, and interact with their legislators in a personal way. The staff of William Winter worked tirelessly to provide an opportunity for the needed programs in education to be put in place and funded (Mullins 1992).

Governor Winter uniquely used his power as “the governor,” in conjunction with his ability to work with and through people to bring about the much-needed reform. The single most important factor that Winter used to his advantage was his knowledge of the intricacies of state government. During his long and distinguished career in public service, he had participated in and observed nearly every aspect of state government. When it came time to change, Winter knew where to press and where to hold off remarkably well. Winter had the vision as the leader, and kept his staff of helpers focused on the goal. The leadership exhibited by this one term governor is an example for all to emulate because of the results attained.

Winter manipulated the structure and organization of the nine forums to focus not on him, but on the legislators in attendance. He encouraged and provided a vehicle for the public to talk one on one with their legislators and tell them how valuable educational reform was; how much it was needed; and more importantly, how they as the voting public would expect them to support the reform efforts. It was a stroke of genius coupled with the calendar timing of the special session to again put the pressure on in a timely manner.

While Governor Winter was quick to give credit to his staff, they in turn knew that the impetus for this reform movement came from him and his collaborative leadership style. Winter worked long and hard for his program. The end result was an improved educational climate in a state that was tired being laughed at because of national ratings. The change provided Mississippians with an opportunity to attract

industry, display the state as a retirement haven, and provide the current citizens with an area that was being strengthened and improved.

In 2002, the Mississippi Department of Education released a report outlining progress made by the state since the passage of the Mississippi Education Reform Act of 1982. The report cited the design of the Act to achieve educational excellence through the following four means: improved state school governance, leadership and finance, improved professional preparation and growth of school personnel, improved school performance, and higher student achievement.

Specifically, the Education Reform Act of 1982 strengthened state leadership of Mississippi's public schools. The state superintendent and members of the Mississippi Board of Education are now appointed positions that provide strong, nonpolitical leadership in public education. The Act also provided the impetus for development of a new performance-based accreditation system to emphasize the outcomes of education, specifically those related to student achievement. In addition, the Commission on School Accreditation and Mississippi Board of Education developed process standards to ensure school districts provide quality-learning environments for students.

Additionally, the Act heightened public awareness for the need for educational improvements and paved the way for the passage of the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP). Now the vehicle for funding school districts (MAEP) has resulted in the issuance of over \$507 million in State Aid Capital Improvement Bonds and more than 9,000 new and renovated classrooms all aimed at improving the quality of education in the state of Mississippi.

Significant changes in the teacher and administrator licensure process have taken place since the passage of the Education Reform Act. The Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development was created to make recommendation to the Mississippi Board of Education regarding standards for the certification and licensure and continuing professional development of Mississippi teachers and administrators. Teaching competencies were piloted and validated and became criteria for clearing provisional certification; as a result, all 15 schools of education restructured their undergraduate curriculum based on these teaching competencies.

In 1994, the Mississippi Teacher Center was established to attract and retain quality teachers in Mississippi. The Center has also implemented several programs outlined in the 1998 Mississippi Critical Teacher Shortage Act, a package of innovative teacher recruitment incentives, including the Critical Needs Scholarship Program and the Mississippi Teacher Fellowship Program.

The Education Reform Act of 1982 established a task force to develop a system of assuring the quality of school programs in Mississippi. This new performance-based school accreditation system was based upon measures that focus on the extent to which schools help students master defined content and objectives. The new system also changed the attendance process from voluntary to compulsory for all schools. In addition, uniform curriculum is now in place in all Mississippi school districts. The Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks are written by Mississippi classroom teachers using national standards for each content area, giving educators flexibility to teach skills and organize

all courses from basic to advanced. The Frameworks are measured by the Mississippi Curriculum Test, a criterion-referenced test that is currently administered to students in grades 2-8. Mississippi teachers have been involved in every phase of the development of criterion-referenced tests. Overall attendance rates have improved by two percentage points since 1982. The dropout rate has also decreased since the Act.

From 1987 through the last use of the Stanford Achievement Test, the average Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores have increased in each subject area tested at grades four and six. On the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), administered statewide to students in grades 4-9 each fall from 1994 through 1998, there were significant gains in both cohort group performance and the annual performance at individual grade levels over a five-year period. In 2000, Mississippi was one of seven states in the nation recognized by the National Education Goals Panel for raising achievement. In addition, the state consistently reduced the percentage of fourth graders scoring below achievement from 1992 to 1998 on the National Assessment for Educational Progress

“This report is a preliminary look at Mississippi’s progress since the passage of the Education Reform Act of 1982,” said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Richard Thompson. “Our information clearly shows that Mississippi’s public education system has made very consistent and significant progress over the past 20 years. We are continuing to gather information and data that will be included in our final report (Mississippi Department of Education, 2002).”

In this study, I set out to prove that the efforts of one man could change a state and its educational system for the better. I wanted to document how William Winter’s

life-long experiences from first grade to the present could affect and change in a positive way the educational system in Mississippi. I discovered if leaders can attack adversity and if the efforts and beliefs are strong enough, change can and will happen. Winter sought, and does so even today, racial reconciliation. Yes, racial reconciliation. The very fact that William Winter was able to change the face of education was remarkable, but it was even more remarkable because of the climate of race relations in Mississippi from 1956 until his election in 1980.

In a speech presented at the University of Mississippi, October 25, 2005, Rita Bender shared the following information:

The Mississippi Sovereignty Commission was created in 1956 by the Mississippi State Legislature with a stated purpose of “doing and performing any acts deemed necessary and proper to protect from encroachment by the Federal Government and to resist the usurpation of the rights and powers of the State.” The Sovereignty Commission reports and memoranda were not made public until 1998 following 16 years of litigation and several orders of the U.S. Courts. The information gleaned from these records contained about 87,000 entries that thousands of people were subject to the dangerous attention of the Commission. The State of Mississippi has never admitted its involvement and culpability for the many heinous crimes that it aided and abetted. These crimes were not isolated acts of a few, but were crimes tainted with government misconduct. The Governor of Mississippi was, in fact, the chair of the Sovereignty Commission, which was funded by the tax paying citizens of Mississippi. In fact, with 40% of the state being African American, they paid to preserve an unconstitutional and oppressive system of government. The Sovereignty Commission funded the White Citizens Councils. The Councils spread racist ideology, which served to encourage violence. The Commission gathered information about would be Black voter registrants and passed their names on. The results being the banning of the Black workers from working, living, or holding any jobs which affected some families who had lived and worked for generations in an area of Mississippi. The Commission disseminated information about persons in the community who were providing housing or other assistance to civil rights workers, resulting in beatings, fire bombings, and murders. Names such as Herbert Lee, Lewis Allen, Medgar Evers, Vernon Dahmer, James Cheney, Mickey Schwerner, & Andy Goodman are famous in Mississippi as patriots who tried to assist African Americans in a

search for equality. The stories would go on and on as to how the Commission tried to protect Mississippi from integration. Governor Winter today is called “liberal” by persons I have spoken to about him in putting together this study. The William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation is such a positive step yet such an unpopular effort even today. Even the day after Edgar Ray Killen was sentenced to life, present day Mississippi Governor Barbour when criticized by Ben Chaney, brother of James Chaney, for wearing a confederate lapel pin, said if anyone did not like it, “tough.” That very same week that Killen was sentenced, the two Mississippi U.S. Senators, Trent Lott and Thad Cochran, refused to join 92 other Senators in a resolution of apology for the Senate’s failures to pass anti-lynching legislation. It is interesting to note that had such legislation passed, many of the 581 lynched in Mississippi (highest in the nation) would have been saved (“Legacy of Slavery: 2005).

Winter was forced to confront racial bias and years of prejudice with the people of Mississippi one on one and face to face, focusing on what was best for the children of Mississippi without regard for the prejudice of the entities involved. He sought what he believed to be the best plan of action for the children of this state as a single focus with the by-product being increased economic opportunity in Mississippi.

In order to make my point, this study focused on two main points. One was how the early years of life have a profound impact on each individual. Winter grew up with black and white children and they were, from his first remembrances, a vital part of the formation of his thoughts and opinions. Secondly, Winter followed a fundamental philosophy that change could occur if the change is explained and discussed thoroughly one on one, with as many people as it took to create the change. Winter taught classes, held public forums, and visited with his constituents regularly during his term of governor. The plan for this entire effort was to reform education. He organized the forums that were conducted across Mississippi in order to touch the people in a face-to-face encounter to allow them to have input into his plan of reform.

This research follows that plan exactly. Chapter IV speaks to the formative years, the early adult years, the political years, and finally the four years as governor. This research is a primer for how adversity can be used to re-direct a leader's effort to succeed. Two occurrences in particular shaped Winter and his plan for reform. The opportunity he had to work with black soldiers during a training phase of his World War II service allowed him to learn from the African American officers. Through that learning, he understood that respect must be earned and cannot be dictated. Secondly, the voice vote taken by House Speaker Newman that all but killed his reform efforts in the 1982 legislature further demonstrated Winter's ability to not give up but to find a new way. Winter's leadership style and skills were something to be envied and many have said, respected. Instead of giving up, he planned a new tactic: the statewide forums meant to touch all the people, challenge the legislature, unify the divided, challenge the "Old South" thinking on education benefiting African Americans, and to ultimately win a victory for the children of Mississippi.

The most amazing occurrence in this writer's opinion was how Winter swept aside many of the racial undertones of some of the old time "Southern" leaders to focus not on a skin color but on human beings, namely children. Governor Winter on many occasions related a visualization of a black and a white man arguing about their plight in life while their children played peacefully nearby.

Our nation got a glimpse of what Winter accomplished in Mississippi through his efforts in *New York Times* and *Washington Post* articles. The *Washington Post* in an article titled, "Mississippi: Going for Growth" related how Governor Winter became tired

of his state being rated at or near the bottom of seemingly every list in America from per capita income to acceptance rate into the military. He knew that economic growth was a key to changing the future of his state and that education would be a key in bringing about that change. For that reason, William sought a \$90 million dollar tax increase to fund an ambitious program of educational reform. The *Post* stated that a lesson should be learned from this for all America: The reluctant wealthy must be willing to assist those areas that are for the larger public good (*"Accomplishments Recognized"*, 1982).

Shortly after the preceding article, the newspaper covered the passage of the reform package and reported how Governor Winter had provided the impetus to raise sales and income taxes. Ray Mabus attributed the passage of the reform package largely to the intense scrutiny the legislature came under (during the forums). Mabus said, "Sunlight is the best disinfectant." The article in the *Post* described how every single black legislator had voted for the bill except one, even with an understanding that the tax would be felt the hardest by their constituents. Jim Simpson, the governor's floor leader, said the reform efforts over the past two decades had failed because many of the white legislators resisted pursuing kindergarten programs because, "they saw it as a babysitting service for black children." Winter felt the needed reform would open the economic development gates that had been closed before because of the failures of the state's educational system.

"Mississippi Governor is Big Winner in Education" was the title of a 1982 *New York Times* article that pointed out while most of the country was reducing social and

educational programs, Mississippi won a victory. Winter said he wanted his state to be “competitive” with the other Southern states.

Vice President Walter Mondale in the same *New York Times* said, “Governor Winter is as good a governor as there is in the nation. He is able, courageous, honest, and a substantial leader. This guy is class.” Vice President Mondale was not the only national politician who heralded the reform legislation passage. Senators Glenn, Hollings, Cranston, and Hart all tried to schedule a visit to Mississippi to congratulate Winter and his staff.

Winter, the *Times* reported, was successful in uniting two factions of his party, the predominately-black group known as Freedom Democrats and the virtually all white group called Regular Democrats. The two factions had been at odds since the civil rights violence of the early 1960’s. Mondale said that not only had Winter united his party within Mississippi, but he had also united Mississippi Democrats with the national party.

Winter, in order to gain passage of his reform package, made over 80 speeches from June to December 1982, while his wife Elise, his staff, and other political friends made over 530 speeches statewide to seek support for educational reform (“Mississippi Victory, 1982).

Winter faced many obstacles in seeing his reform package pass the legislature. He had to overcome the lack of support from House Speaker Newman. He had to align the Freedom Democrats and Regular Democrats so that a unified front was presented, and he had to sell the voting public of Mississippi on the value of change to improve the state’s future.

Today, twenty-three years after the Educational Reform Act was signed into law, much is left to do to continue the improvement cycle of education. One of the individuals who are still working on a daily basis to help Mississippi improve the education of its young people is William F. Winter. In September 2004, Winter and Tupelo businessman Jack Reed began again, a grassroots effort statewide to seek full funding of education in Mississippi. Winter described the effort as a “crusade to mobilize citizens.” Winter said that the public education-funding struggle is reminiscent of 1982, when the reform act was passed. The state’s economy was in recession then, but Winter and his staff traveled the state building grassroots support. “I hope the people of Mississippi understand that the worst situation we could possibly have is cutting back on support of education,” Winter said.

The 2003 legislative session funded education first and fully. “The image of this state has been greatly enhanced. For the word to get out that we are sliding back, that would do damage to our image,” Winter said (Hayden, 2004).

I would like to think that this work, this research, is a payback to William Winter. While giving the commencement address at the University of Mississippi on May 10, 2003, Winter told this story:

Let me close today by telling you about a young Mississippian who understood this (payback). She was a student at Tougaloo College. She told me, ‘It’s payback time for me. I’m going to pay some folks back.’ She could have said that in anger, but she did not seem angry. When she was thirteen years old, the police in Jackson found her living in an abandoned house with her younger sister and brother. Deserted by her parents, she was selling drugs in order to live. They put them all in foster homes. She started back to school, and with encouragement and support from some wonderful teachers she wound up finishing first in her class at Jim Hill High School. That was when I first met her. I helped her get a Coca-Cola scholarship to Tougaloo, where she graduated. Dr. Wally Conerly arranged for

her to work summers at the University Medical Center in Jackson. Since then she has finished at Brown University Medical School in Providence, Rhode Island, and is now doing a Residency at Northwestern University in Chicago. 'It's payback time,' she says. 'I'm coming back to Mississippi and help those people, who helped me, who rescued me from the streets, sent me to school, and let me get to be a doctor. It's payback time.' If we will only think about it, it's payback time for all of us (Payback, 2003).

William Winter at age 83 continues to seek ways to improve education and improve Mississippi.

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APPENDIX A
GEORGE NIGH

Former Oklahoma Governor George Nigh, September 28, 2004, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Q: Governor Nigh, when did you meet William Winter?

A: I think Governor Winter and I met at a National Governors conference in the early 1980's. We were having dinner and Governor Winter walked up and asked if he and his wife could join Donna and me. We had a grand evening of visiting and sharing war stories about the trials and tribulations of being governor of a state that did not carry the name, experience the scrutiny, or have the resources of some of the bigger states. I got my first glimpse at that time of a true southern gentleman. We maintained contact for years. In fact on one occasion I had the opportunity to come to Jackson and visit with the Governor about a legislative matter regarding funding for education and building and maintaining a relationship with the oil industry.

Q: What you find most difficult about being Governor?

A: I was fortunate in that when I came into office in Oklahoma we had more money than we had places to spend it because of the developing oil discovery in the western half of the state. I could build roads and schools almost with a snap of my fingers. That made being governor very easy and also made me very popular. Easy come and sometimes easy goes, for in the early 1980 we suffered a major recession and the price of oil when down, the number of producing rigs decreased, the number of new rigs dropped, and the oil field suppliers were dropping like wild flies, and I was suddenly asked to work a budget based on steak and potatoes with only pinto beans to offer up. It was needless to

say a most difficult time in my state. Even today some twenty five years after my tenure, a few folks hold my feet to the fire as the one who ruined their lives.

Q: Do you have a feel based on your experience in Oklahoma how much Governor Winter accomplished in 1982 when the reform movement came to pass?

A: I certainly do. The most remarkable accomplishment of reform occurred after it had been soundly voted down by the legislature at least twice before. I think a more remarkable achievement was how William took the reform effort to the people, and let them decide whether or not changes were to be made. Most citizens have no idea how difficult it is to go out on a daily basis and not lose focus of why you are among the constituents. I have campaigned and traveled all over my state, and I readily admit that sometime I would be feeling like I was a tape recorder with five or six different tapes to play depending on the audience. I might get in front of a group of bankers and play tape on banking, educators and play the tape on education or a group of lawyers and play my tape on legal reform. I can appreciate much more than most how difficult it must have been for Governor Winter to have traveled and spoken so much, yet apparently from the results he kept everything in focus. I admire him so much that he not only championed the cause of education, but he also was able to build bridges among different ethnic groups who historically did not relate nor understand each other very well. Not only that, but he accomplished his goal nearing the end of a four year term where he was basically lame-duck with no hope of succeeding himself. That mere fact shows me what a fighter for education improvement he was and what a concerned citizen he was. I can only hope

that the people in Mississippi can give Governor Winter credit for bringing about a complete paradigm shift in educational thought to a state that many folks think of as one not really concerned about the total educational process.

Q: What do you do as a former Governor to keep your agendas on the radar, so to speak so that hopefully your efforts would not have been in vain?

A: Obviously I can't do as much as I once did, but the advantage to being a former governor is that I am not running for anything, from anything, or to anything. I can say and do what I damn well please. In many ways that is freeing to me in that I can lobby, speak, suggest, and critique current situations. In addition, as long as I don't step too far out of bounds, I am still held in high esteem as the former Governor of Oklahoma and former President of Central State University. I have read recently that William is even more active than I in Mississippi in speaking out for public education. We need to visit and maybe he can help kindle some new flames in me.

(G. Nigh, personal communication, September 28, 2004.)

APPENDIX B
DAVID CREWS

Interview: David Crews by Andy Mullin, May 23, 1991, Jackson, Mississippi.
(David Crews was the press secretary of Governor William F. Winter).

Q: Do you remember any in the early days, the 1980's, 1981, any newspapers that were particularly helpful: Any editors, reporters come to mind that was progressive on education prior to the year 1982:

A: The first one that comes to mind, the *Tupelo Journal* was always an advocate and had a long tradition of kind of advocacy for programs in education and in highways...those two in particular. George McLean had been a real energetic and forceful, effective leader. The *Tupelo Journal* was a natural ally and gave us a lot of good support. They would do editorials at the drop of a hat and would put reporters on to sort of a bird dog topic, and they did several series of articles that were very helpful. The *Clarion Ledger* can around in time. That was in those early days. It was still a Hederman newspaper, but Ray Hederman had taken over, the young Ray Hederman, who was not part of the ancient regime of the Hedermans. He started the transition of the *Clarion-Ledger* to a much more effective, aggressive, well-targeted, better written newspaper. The chemistry of the media tracked William Winter's personality, really. Winter is an open, responsive person. He believes in a person and he believes in the accessibility of the press that includes all the information, so it was very easy for my (as press secretary) to be open and responsive to the needs of the press. Winter's personality, Winter's chemistry, I think did so much to put things on the right footing, both his personality and the fact that substance of what he and administration were trying to achieve in the educational areas. Not to neglect a couple of TV stations, WLBT, Bert

Case and several of the reporters there were very helpful. I would call Bert up a lot. Bert was always supportive of a good news story that had an education cast to it. There were some other stations too. They kind of elude me. Most of them were kind of pitiful, quite frankly.

Q: I know Lloyd Gray, who worked at the *Sun* at that time, wrote a lot of early supportive editorials.

A: Lloyd did indeed. If you're doing background work on Winter and his staff, you ought to get the series that Lloyd did. Lloyd was the Jackson bureau correspondent for the *South Mississippi Sun* and the *Daily Herald*. He wrote a series called *All the Governors Men*.

Q: (Pittman) wrote a very critical article of Winter's legislative style after the failure of the 1981 Blue Ribbon Committee and said it was because of Winter's style.

A: He sure did. Right.

Q: It was not your backroom bargain, etc.

A: Right, which is kind of a spurious argument. You know, Winter is not a backroom, dirty tricks, arm-twisting kind of guy. He is kind of open, which generally the press likes. But I think Winter learned through time, some new tricks, and he increasingly played hardball every time. I think that's one of the reasons why the 1982 Education Reform Act passed, was there was some hardball played toward the end but

not in a sinister, backroom kind of way. It was all up front with hardball politics. I think he did generate some of that as time went on.

Q: You mentioned a little bit, you touched on a little bit about how it was easy, based on Winter's philosophy, to be open, responsive to the press. But talk a little bit more about how you really established a good relationship with the press or so it appeared. How did you do that?

A: Well, you know, there's no sport for the short-winded. Just like that, the whole Education Reform Act was not sport for the short-winded. Winter and all of us were committed to it, thought it wasn't a seamless process. There were a lot of hitches in our get-along and a lot of stumbles, etc. You know, we went from the 1982 session where you remember that wonderful speech Winter gave, boat-rocking time in Mississippi- to address the special session, the State of the State address.

Q: Did he come up with that, or do you know where he got that theme?

A: That was Winter's, as I recall, that was Winter's idea. I think Winter had heard that. Winter came up with that. The next year, we came up with the idea. We took that one step further. We got a couple of things in that session of the legislature, not the kindergartens and some voc-tech legislation. The lay board was established in 1982 regular session. But I remember that Winter so (inaudible) these words that I latched onto like resourceful. The word resourceful kept appearing in that speech. We took that theme. Winter always had those written ahead of time. Winter would basically do the

first draft, and then I'd work with him and hone it and refine it. But we took that boat-rocking theme and took it one step further. It's boat-rockin time in Mississippi. It was boat-rockin time last year and ya'll did a lot. It still is boat-rocking time. We've got to take it one step further. It's bullet-biting time in Mississippi now. While boat-rocking time is by no means over, another time has come upon us. It's bullet-biting time in Mississippi. It's time to put up or shut up. It's time to shape up or ship out. That was a paragraph I crafted and used that kind of lyrical shape up/ship out, boat-rocking, bullet-biting, setting up the dichotomy. It's kind of a Kennedy saves, Churhillian. It's time to quit studying and start doing, this kind of theme, there.

Q: So the fact that we were open and responsive to the press and gave them things to write about (inaudible).

A: Yes, one, I think underlines all of us, underlines Winter is that it was substantive. That was kind of some of the stuff that Minor and Pittman would object to sometimes. Winter wasn't colorful enough. Winter wasn't (inaudible) there wasn't any of that element of bullshit. He was too articulate and on target. He was too substantive for them. They didn't have enough flamboyant stuff to write about. I think that was the element of some of that hostility from time to time.

Q: It may have been some jealousy, intellectual jealousy?

A: It was, very much so. Here they finally had an equal, someone that couldn't look down on, someone who was probably smarter, was smarter than they are. But, and

I'll say this, Winter is the most humble politician I've ever met, with little to be humble about. I mean he is the most humble person which is extraordinary in politics. But getting back to what would underline it all was substance. Substance that Winter insisted upon the substance his staff was able to give him because he was able to put together a really top-notch staff. So we built a very strong package that inarguably would have an impact. Education packages are going to have an impact that threatens a lot of people, but it was going to have an impact. The press recognized that and appreciated it. The press was basically young. They embraced Winter's youthfulness, the fact that he ran, the fact that he liked them. He generally liked the press and he was substantive and they liked all those things. I want to say one thing because I firmly believed this about the 1982 Education Reform Act process. If you look at it, what really went on there was that we turned that effort into a campaign, and that's why we won. That's why it won. We built a strong package, a strong substantive package, but then, you had to take it one step further and that's something we hadn't done in the past. We turned it into a full-fledged campaign, complete with the whole choreography of the campaign, the fund raising. We put together Mississippians for Quality Education.

Q: Let me ask you something on that theme. It appeared after the 1981 legislation failed, it appeared that Winter began the consensus building almost by (inaudible) he fell into it more or less. It didn't appear at first from his speeches and all that I've read that he planned to do that. He started hammering on it. Did that just evolve, and we said,

“Here’s something we need to latch onto and really go full speed with the consensus building,” or was it just the natural path to take? Was it planned?

A: I think it was both. I think like most things, it was driven, in part by fear that Winter was not going to get anything really major accomplished. We were fearful of that, I think of all of us were, number one. Number two, this state badly needed that. We were outside out mainstream. That whole effort was to get us into the mainstream, and that was one of William’s themes both in education and in economic development. The fact that he brought people from outside, like John Henegan coming back to Mississippi for Washington, Ray Mabus coming back to Mississippi, Dick Molpus coming in from the business world, General Berry coming in and the caliber of the people he brought in, all that was trying to bring Mississippi into the mainstream. But there was an element of just stumbling across strategy. I think most strategies are part of you stumble across them, but its part choreographed. It wasn’t full-blown the first day, but we said, you know, we’ve got to do something that we haven’t done right in the past. What the element (inaudible) I found; we turned it into a campaign, a full-fledged campaign. We had fund raising; we bought pages; we produced TV spots. I worked with Maris, West, & Baker, I can’t remember the guy’s name, but he and I would go in the studio and produce TV spots and produce newspaper ads. We had MQE which raised \$70 some thousand dollars, Bobby Chain, Bill Jones, Warren Hood, Jim Campbell, and a number of others who were charter member of Mississippians for Quality Education. We had a campaign (inaudible) those forums were nothing but campaign rallies: those were stump speeches. There was more passion, as you well know, in those rallies than anything, any

kind of political forum since the turn of the century, since the 1920's and the 1930's when there wasn't TV. There was a lot of passion; there was a lot of anger.

Q: That wasn't racist, a lot of passion before with a racist theme.

A: There was a lot of healthy passion, exactly. But those forums came as close as you'll get to those stump politics. You had direct mail. You had organization of people all over the state that had phone banks who would call their legislators. There was immense organizational support that went on. We had endorsements from newspapers, editorials. We choreographed the media efforts. The *Clarion-Ledger* did a wonderful series of stories that led up to the special session and then during the special session itself, they would editorialize everyday.

Q: Let's talk about the forums for a minute. Any anecdotes, reflections on any of the nine forums that you remember particularly that come back:

A: The one that I remember the most was the first one. I think it was the first one, Oxford?

Q: Oxford

A: I flew up there with Winter. I remember Molpus was on the same plane and one other person, I can't remember who it was. But that was my hometown. I remember flying over the city and seeing the avalanche, a flood of cars surrounding it, which was something of a surprise, I think, to all of us. Winter reiterated that education theme time

and time and time again. That was part of the critical element of it too. And, you know, this is trivial to me, but I know you know this. Winter started playing some real hardball toward the end. There was that fear, that concern, that Winter was going to go down in history as being a nice guy but not an effective politician if he didn't get this. One we needed it for his place in history. First and foremost, we needed it because it was the right thing to do, to make an impact and make a difference in people's lives, and no one needs it more than Mississippi. The entire effort was true grassroots media, everything. All the ingredients were there. It was a classic modern campaign. What made it work was and perhaps why it had not worked previously is that they could say no to Andy Mullins, they could say no to David Crews, they could not say no to William Winter. What we did, we built a fire under the constituents. The one thing that strikes me, getting back to Winter because he was the core and the heart and the soul of this thing, of that Education Reform Act. I can't think of any politician in this era that's had a legacy like his in terms of what the substance of the 1982 Education Reform Act was.

Q: That is interesting, a revolution that continues to have an impact.

A: The ripple goes on. He still has an impact. Winter wanted to find a way to make it work and wasn't going to die in the ditch. He saw the bigger picture. It eventually happened, but it was such a rich process.

(Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage, 2004.)

APPENDIX C

CHARLES DEATON

Interview: Charles M. Deaton, Administrative Assistant for William F. Winter

Q: You were very instrumental, probably the most instrumental person on the Winter's staff in getting the business community involved in the whole education reform process. Tell me a little bit about that and mention some business leaders that were helpful.

A: Well, part of the other duties I had probably under William were in the areas of economic development and working with the Board of Economic Development and later serving on it. William was convinced, and I was too, that you could not succeed in an education reform or education package without pretty good support from the business people. That meant that you had to have some connection with the Trustmark crowd, the Deposit Guaranty crowd, and a lot to do with Jackson leadership, I think. People like Jim Campbell, Rowan Taylor, Warren Hood, Frank Day, well, just people that you had to have some, O.K., not necessarily approval, but you didn't want them working on you so to speak by being negative. And there were other leaders across the state that were very supportive of it. But these particular men, you might say, would have connection statewide. They could call people.

Q: You were somewhat concerned during the 1981 and really 1982 (inaudible) before the special session, really before the forums started in the fall of 1982; you were worried about some of the overly eager staff in some of their speeches angering some of the legislators. I know William was concerned about it, also. Is that true, Charlie?

A: Yes. I think that, I guess just in my working with the legislature and other people, politicians are always very sensitive about criticism, naturally. My thinking, and I think William's thinking was to "let's look at the problem and talk about the problem in the school system and what we could do about it and not try to get on any particular legislator or any particular factional group, but let's address it to the needs of the school child." We probably had some people who, in the past, particularly coming out of that severance thing, seemed to want to pick on certain people and make the legislators the object of their attention instead of the problems in the school system.

Q: Do you have any observations, remembrance of any of the forums?

A: Well, in Laurel, I think we had a principal of a school who got up and spoke out in session, who said we could pass all the laws we wanted to in Jackson or something to that effect, but that he had a lot of children in his school that you just can't teach. I remember that he started quite a hullabaloo and there was a lady from Masonite, who had moved in there from Illinois, and fortunately, I didn't have to take the principal to task, the lady did it very well. That symbolized to me one problem that we had, was the thinking that we just had to teach easy courses and let some people slide through because you couldn't teach them. This, I think, had become hard, and this was a part of the problems I think a lot of us saw in the education system that a certain percentage of people just, that the people were ready to write off. Instead of teaching them what they needed to be exposed to, we were giving them second and third rate courses and virtually letting them drift through the system.

Q: What did you advise Winter about whether to call a special session or not?

A: Well, I won't say, it wouldn't have been my decision as such, but we talked about it I guess probably for months but anyway, it was not just a hopped up situation. And I think we all debated it. The staff did from time to time, and we debated it among ourselves. We all finally came to an agreement that if we were going to address education reform, we did not need to get caught up on a session with all the other problems and bills and lobbying and the various things that would come out of it. Also, if we were going to fund it that was the other decision, a good decision, that was to try and fund those reforms at the same session so it wouldn't be passing it on. After the regular session came up, then any other funding would be on its own. It would not be just tied to education. We had to get that fight over. Quite frankly, we thought in December was a good time because everybody wanted to be home for Christmas and New Year's. Also, you had the session starting up in January that there would be some pressure on the legislature to address the business and go home.

Q: Was the special session a factor in its passing? Would it have passed in the next regular session?

A: No, no way.

Q: What about Winter's flexibility on how to fund it? Lt. Governor Brad Dye said in his opinion that was the factor.

A: I don't think it's any question. I think if William hadn't served in the legislature and having had that background and knowing that you can call it compromise, you can call it (inaudible), but what's possible. And here we had a package of education reform which was badly needed, one of the first in the United States, and you're not going to stumble on where you'll get the money from. It's time to do the thing and Winter had that touch to know that.

(Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage, 2004)

APPENDIX D

RAY MABUS

Interview: Ray Mabus, Legal Counsel and Legislative Assistant for William F. Winter who later became Governor of Mississippi.

Q: Why did this thing pass, in your opinion? What were the major factors?

A: The factors were that it was passed by an outside strategy and not an inside strategy. We went to the people instead of (inaudible) the notion that you weren't campaigners. The notion that the Governor would put so much of his own political capital into one issue and would speak about nothing else was remarkable. He would focus on that to the exclusion of almost everything else and so did his staff and so did everybody else. The fact that he was willing to take the chance, and did so, to call a special session was remarkable. You know, going into that, you read those newspaper articles the day before the session started and everybody was predicting defeat. Several of the leaders were saying, "We're just going to just meet one day and adjourn." It was more like a campaign: we had phone banks, we had letter-writing campaigns, we had people from all over the state. It was not William Winter or his staff. It wasn't his bill; it became a lot of the people's bill, a lot of people's cause. Here was something that people had fought for for years. Here was a chance not only to catch up but to take a big step forward. Legislators who had voted against playing for for years got caught up in the field.

It was an opportunity. I don't know of any one thing other than the fact that Governor Winter was willing to stick with it for long. The fact is, he had a bunch of staff members who didn't know any better. (Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage, 2004.

APPENDIX E

DICK RILEY

Interview: Dick Riley former Governor of South Carolina and Secretary of Education under President Bill Clinton, September 24, 2004

Q: When did you first meet William Winter?

A: He and I first met at, I believe, a Southern Governor's Conference in Atlanta in the early 1980's. We were drawn together because of our mutual interest in education. I am not too sure but what South Carolina was in as much need of reform as was Mississippi. We became very good friends which is why we remain in contact today, some twenty –five years later. I could sense that William had the same passion as I regarding educational reform and the need to upgrade our system in order to attract the kind of growth that he and I both needed.

Q: What do you most remember about William Winter?

A: Simply that he was the epitome of a southern gentlemen. He was so polite, so articulate, and so well mannered. I don't mean that I thought he would be a political pushover. I mean as a man's man. William always had an idea where he wanted to lead the state of Mississippi educationally and he was ready to do what it took to get there. I remember how angry he was after the political closing of the 1982 session and how he said to me that the gauntlet had really been laid down. I think of all the things I will remember about William is how he would not give up on his dream. What was even more remarkable was his ability to do it while being only a one term governor.

Q: How difficult was reform in 1982 when the economy was in such difficult shape?

A: Interesting question...but I think that points out even more how remarkable his leadership was in gaining passage. Look, he was not going to sell the legislature on the need for reform, so he went in through the back door through the constituents and had them put the pressure on the legislature. I think it was genius how he undertook the grassroots meetings around the state and how he organized in detail those meetings to put pressure on the legislature. We were in the same boat financially in South Carolina and I was not trying to pass a reform package nearly as huge as William's, but because of the efforts I had to make to get a pay raise for teachers, I can appreciate even more his accomplishments. In fact, I don't know if that could be done today. It truly was remarkable.

Q: How did you use any of what William did while Secretary of Education.

A: President Clinton was very good friends with William also. Several times in discussions regarding education, he would say, "I wonder how Governor Winter would do this," or "I wonder how Governor Winter would do that." Even with all the pressures of the White House, Bill Clinton used the work of Winter to accomplish and meet his goals. What a compliment, at least it seems to be one to me.

(Riley, D. personal communication, September 24, 2004.)

APPENDIX F

BILL MINOR

Interview: Bill Minor, September 21, 2004. Columnist for the *Clarion Ledger*.

Q: When Winter was elected how did you see him as being different than previous governors you had been associated with?

A: William Winter is the only governor in my forty plus years of experience who came in with both experience in the House and Senate, and having been lieutenant governor. He was uniquely experienced and knew a lot of the ways and means of the legislature.

Q: His initial statements as governor showed a great deal of support for education. Was this not very unusual?

A: Sure. We had other governors' talk about education. Education has been a big ticket item here in Mississippi a long time. You could look back at Governor Hugh White who enacted the minimum foundation program and the school equalization program. I think Winter came in with more of a plan than a precise idea on what he was going to try to do in education, and he took on the issue of kindergartens, which he knew was the biggest single weakness in public schools. Kindergartens had been addressed by Governor Bill Waller but he settled on a reduced pupil/teacher ratio in the first three grades. That certainly was an improvement, but it was no substitute for kindergarten.

Q: Winter seemed to disappoint several journalists in the 1980, 1981, and 1982 legislative sessions with his style. He was accused by one of not pushing for education reforms in the old way of back room wheeling and dealing. Did you feel the same way?

A: Yes, in fact I was critical of Winter about that and I really thought he might not be tough enough with his legislative dealings. Our legislative branch had always had a reputation of being very tough on governors. I did compliment Winter for his efforts to raise money for kindergarten programs. I would have to say that Winter recognized that reform in Mississippi would take a long time and that it would take a patient and tedious process in order to get it completed. Reform in Mississippi just did not come easy and he was committed to staying the course. I have known other governors that after they were shot down the first legislative session, would have abandon their reform efforts.

Q: What were your thoughts on how Winter went public with his efforts after 1981 to sell the entire state on reform?

A: Several big events help the scenario play out. One was the fact of that in the 1982 regular session when House Speaker Newman had adjourned the legislature on the deadline day when the kindergarten bill was on the calendar and reachable, and he ruled that the House had adjourned. Of course, it was widely believed and certainly thought that more had voted not to adjourn than to adjourn. If he had seen sensitive to the demand that existed for the program, he'd have been sensible enough to keep the House in session, but again that is how difficult reform is in Mississippi. The effect that "20/20" had on the reform efforts was huge. They had heard about what Newman had done and

came to investigate. Many thought I was the one who contacted ABC, but I did not. I was interviewed and the report made Speaker Newman look very bad and in fact created a new momentum for kindergarten. The other event that was very important was Winter calling the special session only three weeks before Christmas. He put the legislature in a position of getting something done in a very defined time frame with limits. Initially I was critical of the special session because I felt he was marching literally into a political valley of death because I felt he did not have the votes lined up to gain passage. As it turned out, he did have more support than I thought. While some of the big hitters in the House and Senate openly said the reform package would not pass, the timing of Newman's adjournment, 20/20, and the date of the special session in December was perfect. The other factor was the *Clarion-Ledger* did a wonderful piece of journalism to support the reform efforts. With so many legislators being from Jackson being pounded by the local newspaper the effect was obvious.

Q: Were you surprised when it passed?

A: I was, I must admit I was. I labeled it the "Christmas Miracle of 1982," because I think it was tremendous.

Q: Could the reform package have been passed with another governor?

A: No, because Winter was amenable to any kind of revenue plan. He was not stuck on one plan and he was not opposed to raising taxes. In fact he did not try to sell the

legislature that it could be done with no new taxes. He saw a need for reform and was flexible enough to see it completed.

Q: Were you surprised at the support that was generated in really only about one year?

A: Yes. I had seen, as I said earlier, other attempts at reform. Finch tried to get the \$20 car tag, and Waller tried some public meetings, but nothing like what happened here. What was really so creative and innovative were the forums all over the state. I did not attend any of them but it appeared to me that there was a great deal of preaching to the saved going on which led to a gathering together of a band of support. When the legislature met, that support made a difference in that they exerted a great deal of pressure on the politicians.

Q: Any criticism of Winter today?

A: The only thing that comes to mind is that there was a thought or two that he devoted so much effort toward educational reform that other needs were not addressed. I don't really know if that is valid or not. I do know that even today he is held in high esteem and works for the betterment of education. I also will tell you he is a peaceful man. Last Sunday he called and picked me up to go with him to Philadelphia, Mississippi to be part of a ceremony honoring the three civil rights workers who were murdered.

(Minor, B, personal communication, September 21, 2004.)

APPENDIX G
JOHN HENEGAN

Interview: John Henegan, March 18, 2003, Jackson, Mississippi.

Q: What was it like working for and with William Winter?

A: The most delightful and hard working man I have ever known. He was the consummate gentlemen. He was the hardest working human I have ever known. We would have staff meeting beginning at, let's say 8 a.m. and when I would arrive at 7 or 7:30, Winter would already be there. He was very organized and methodical. His operational methods were like a cook cooking a gourmet meal, very by the book and step 1, then step 2, etc.

Q: Moving to the actual passage of the Educational Reform Act, what were the factors in getting the bill passed?

A: It wouldn't have happened without Governor Winter. For example, he had so much experience in state government. He had been present and I think he was actually there in the legislature when Governor Coleman called his special session to try to adopt a constitutional convention in 1958. Even though Governor Coleman didn't get what he wanted, he got some compromises out of that in the next regular session. Governor Winter had been there, and he knew that. None of us had that kind of experience, nobody else. I think another important thing was him having a young staff that was idealistic with fresh faces. Several of them had a lot of ambition and general interest in the subject they were working with. I also think a factor was the public support and how Winter molded a plan to get the public involved through forums, and the newspapers to cover the forums.

All the combinations were in place, it just took a plan by Winter and our staff to bring it off.

(Henegan, J. personal communication, March 18, 2003.)

APPENDIX H
ELISE WINTER

Interview: Elise Winter, July 24, 1991, Jackson, Mississippi.

Q: When did you first feel that the reform movement had a chance to pass?

A: The ABC 20/20 program provided the first real crack in the armor of House Speaker Newman. It was the first time people of Mississippi saw the power of the Speaker used in a negative way. The 20/20 program cast Newman in a role that he couldn't get rid of. Buddie Newman had a tiger by the tail and he simply couldn't turn loose.

Q: What do you remember about the forums?

A: The one in Laurel had the potential to be very hostile. Dick Molpus said William was like a man holding a bomb, and he defused that bomb inside the auditorium. I think he delivered the most masterful speech of all the forums. Also, while we were at the Laurel forum an angry professor from the University of Southern Mississippi confronted me. He said he had studied kindergarten and his findings were not what we were seeking. He said kindergartens were a waste of money and that our information was wrong.

Q: What was the most confusing part of the reform legislative sell?

A: I thought the lay board of education would be a hard sell because descriptions of it put many people to sleep.

Q: What concerns did you have when the special session was called?

A: I had a deep rooted fear that the legislature would vote to adjourn the first day which would have been the most embarrassing thing that could happen.

Q: What were your thoughts when the sales tax passed to fund the reform legislation?

A: The legislative process is absolutely amazing. Sometimes I cannot help but think that if Thomas Jefferson in his wisdom had foreseen the Mississippi Legislature as it floundered and almost stopped dead, still with parliamentary procedure...he might have wondered about the wisdom of democracy. I guess I am just shell-shocked from too many years in politics. I kept thinking that the hammer was going to fall (on the legislation).

Q: What were the moments before final passage like?

A: William was calm and said, "it's going to be all right," but he said he just couldn't listen to all of it as it went along. Staff people were coming and going, but everybody showed a lot of pressure. It was so obvious that months of hard work, in fact almost a lifetime in William's case, could just go up right there in one vote.

Q: As you analyze William's attributes, speak to his most evident strength.

A: William was a long-term student of the art of compromise. His knowledge of and belief in compromise sustained his optimism during some of the dispirited periods. I remember a speech William delivered early in his political career that illustrated his faith in compromise. The speech was delivered in April, 1962, at Centre College in Kentucky

and was entitled, “In Defense of the Practical Politician.” In the speech William touched on a philosophy that would benefit him two decades later. He said:

There are indeed few absolutes...in a society as diverse as the American society of today, it is manifestly out of the question for our government to operate except on the basis of a recognition of different and even diametrically opposing viewpoints and of a willingness to accommodate differences...What legislator worth his salt has not lain awake at night and wrestled with his conscience as he pondered the eternal problem of expedience versus judgment...But whether we approach the subject from the point of view of issues or individuals it seems that we come quickly and inevitably to this conclusion: That compromise per se is not only not bad but on the other hand is as necessary as breathing...The legitimate use of this complex art must be our concern, rather than whether we should practice it...in many cases, perhaps in most, the willingness to compromise involves great courage, and the more sharply defined the issues and the more deeply divided the partisans, the greater the courage that is required...It is simply one of the most effective working tools that a political leader has, and the manner in which it is used can go a long way toward determining how successful his administration is in terms of getting things done...It is especially in legislative activity that the problem of a single instance in which any piece of legislation that might be termed controversial was ever passed without some modification in the nature of compromise.

(Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage, 2004)

APPENDIX I
WILLIAM F. WINTER

Interview: William F Winter, October 19, 2004 & February 12, 2005, Jackson, Mississippi.

Q: Who was the one person who supported you the most during your reign as Governor of Mississippi?

A: Warren Hood provided me with moral support but in all honesty without his financial support I would never have been able to accomplish what I did, if I accomplished anything. Others of note were Lew Percy, Owen Cooper, Chauncey Godwin, Jack Reed, and George McLean.

Q: What motivated you to seek and spend so much time and effort in getting the reforms in education passed?

A: A company in Chicago, the name of which I don't recall, was committed to coming to Pearl River County. This high-tech plant was exactly what we needed and were trying to get. They were set to come and suddenly they called and said they were going to South Carolina. I flew to Chicago and met with the CEO. I asked why he had changed his mind. He said, "he liked everything in Mississippi, but the educational system could not produce a large enough supply of trained workers." He said, "we decided that you could not supply us with our needs, and we were not impressed the school system where we wanted to go... so we're going to South Carolina." I then came back to the education leaders of Mississippi and said we had to correct this problem.

Q: Where did you get the theme, "Boat-Rocking Time in Mississippi?"

A: We were looking for a catch phrase. We were looking for something the media would pick up on that would not be the norm. I used it in a 1982 speech to kind of get us off dead center and provide us with a rallying point or phrase.

Q: When the 1982 regular session ended without passage of the main educational issues, did you begin to have doubts about reform coming in your administration?

A: I did because the conventional wisdom was that, by this time, a governor unable to succeed himself was such a lame duck that if he hadn't accomplished anything at the end of the third session, he probably was not going to get anything passed because the next session would be in an election year and they would already be looking toward the next administration. I did feel that what we had done had had an impact and that if we got a governor elected who was committed to education, he probably would be able to pass something. I was really second guessing myself as to whether I should have sought legislation aimed at gubernatorial succession instead of devoting so much time to educational reform. I had some depressed feeling as I felt time slipping away and I knew it was too late to get succession measures passed. I was not real confident, but I was not going to give up either.

Q: Did you begin thinking about a special session immediately after the 1982 regular session?

A: I knew that if we were going to pass anything, it would need to be during a special session. I began to take surveys around the state to determine attitudes.

Q: In the summer of 1982, ABC aired the 20/20 program on House Speaker Newman. Did you watch and if you did what did you think?

A: I did watch. I was interviewed by Tom Jarrell. He pushed pretty hard but I would not blast the speaker because I knew he was still the speaker and that I would have to deal with him later. I did not want to in any way burn bridges. I do think the program had a huge impact on the public regarding the legislature and its failure to act. In fact I think it had was very significant in changing some attitudes. I was not really sure what impact it would have, but I did know that I didn't want to get into a verbal shoot-out with Speaker Newman.

Q: Shortly after the airing, you began to have forums. Where did the idea for the forums come from?

A: It evolved out of a series of staff discussions that we had as a staff. We knew that public opinion was going to be the only thing that would move the legislature to act. We also knew that we must use specific business leaders in the business community and all of the education community. I had used all my tricks. I had no assurances that the forums would work or that anybody would come. It could have been a disaster. What they demonstrated was the tremendous support that we had never tapped, and how it came together in a very dramatic way. The legislators who attended the forums found out for the first time what a tremendous amount of support there was for education in this state.

Q: Explain how the forums were organized.

A: Andy Mullins and I met with the school superintendents in the area before the meeting started. In the general assembly, Jim Merritt would introduce some statistics, I was introduced and gave a speech to the whole group. In the general assembly I would introduce individually the legislators present and really brag on them. I think that was key because it identified them to the audience. An interesting sidebar, Bill Minor and several other journalists said they remembered other governors who had called a meeting of supporters in Jackson, but it was the first time they had ever gone out to the public.

Q: Do you remember much about the first forum in Oxford?

A: It was Tuesday evening after Labor Day. Elise and I had spent the weekend down on the Coast, relaxing and wondering what would happen next. I was afraid nobody would show up and if some did how we would be received. We flew to Oxford. As we drove in from the airport, it reminded me of a Friday night football crowd. There were cars everywhere. The auditorium was running over with people. It was at that point that I knew we had really hit a vein of support, and that it would by far exceed our original expectations. We found out that some had driven in from over one hundred miles away. That told me that people wanted the face of education to change.

Q: Where was the most difficult forum held?

A: Jackson. We had a smaller crowd without much spirit, and the legislators who attended were negative. I felt in lower spirits after that meeting than any we had.

Q: Was there any single event before the special session began that you remember or that had a great impact on you and or the proceedings?

A: Dr. Joe Tuten, who was pastor of Jackson Calvary Baptist Church, wrote one of the most poignant articles in support of education reform of anyone during the entire movement. It was titled, "Is God interested in what happens to Mississippi education?" It was very timely and very effective.

Q: Why did you not include other agenda items to be addressed in the special session?

A: I did not want to clutter up the agenda and I wanted the focus on education to be there.

Q: What were your thoughts after the passage of the Act in December of 1982?

A: I was convinced we were right and that the timing was right also.

Q: Looking back on your four years, what would you have changed?

A: I think we got accomplished what we were sent to do. I think like any former governor, I would like to have done more, but I really feel that the impact we made on this state was something that the entire state could be proud of. I know I certainly was and am.

(Winter, W. personal communication, October 19, 2004 & February 12, 2005.)